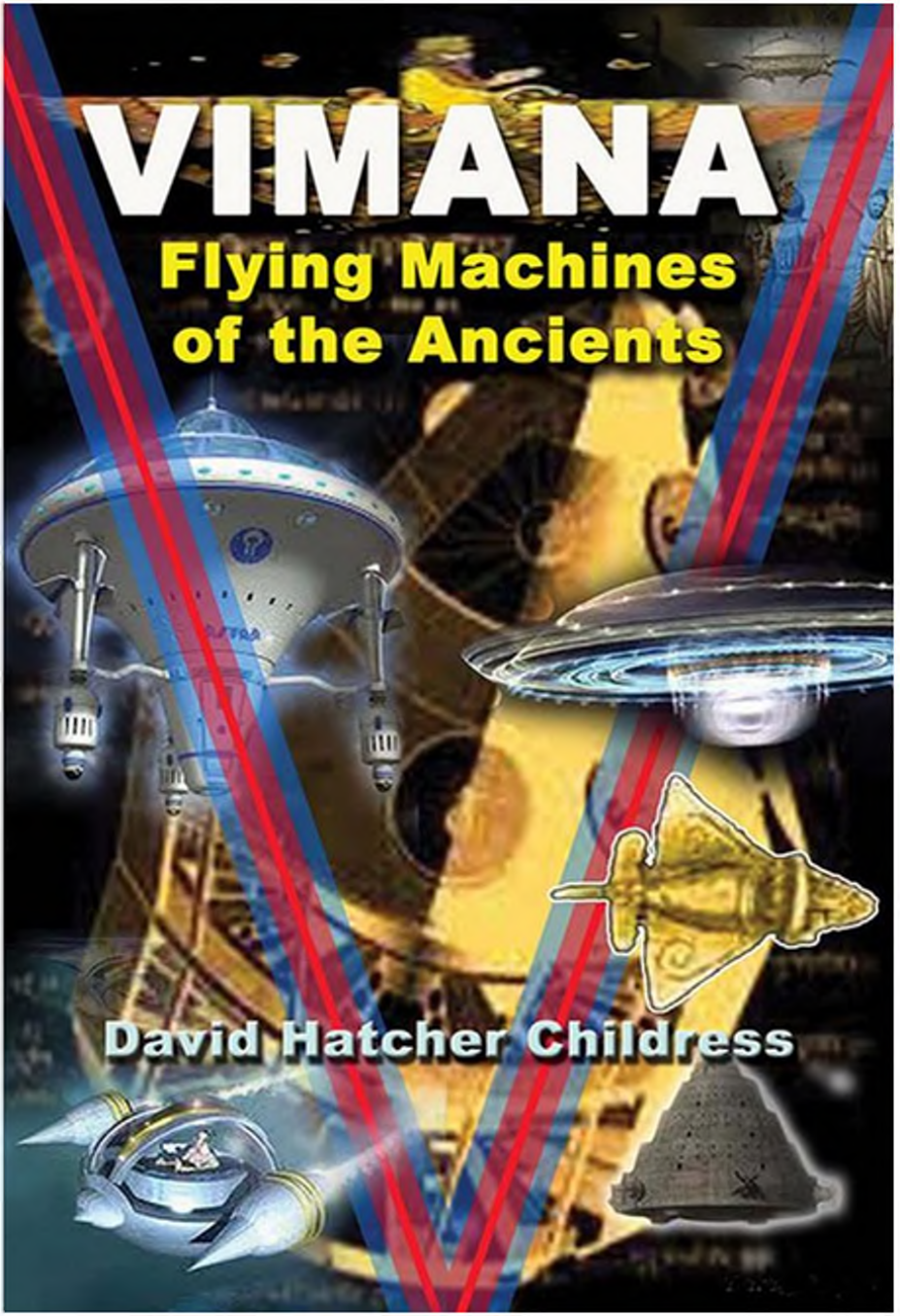
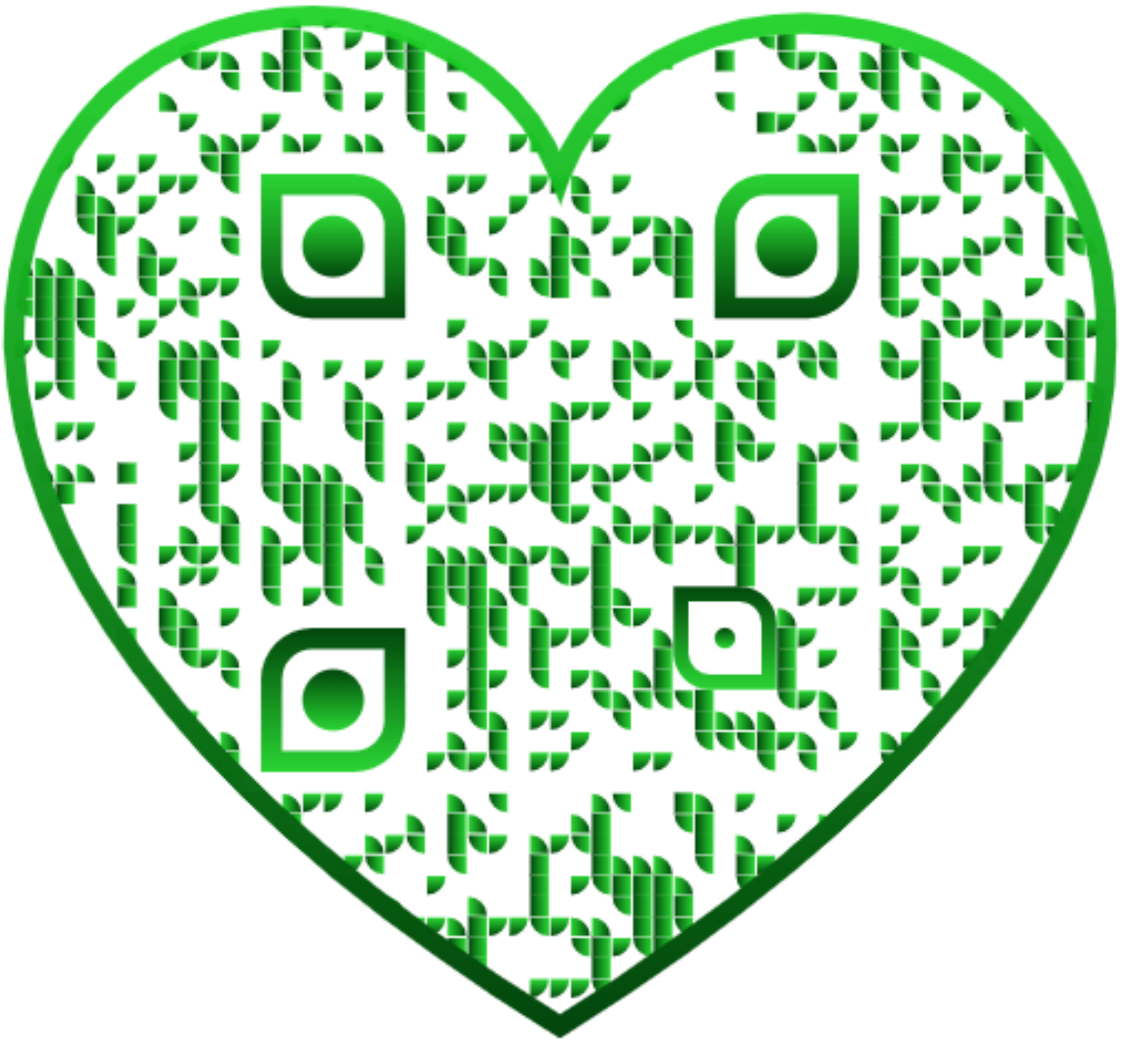

VIMANA
Flying Machines
of the Ancients
David Hatcher Childress



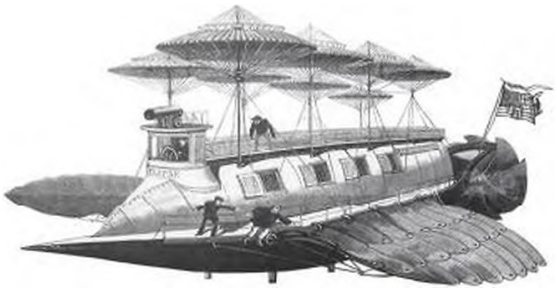
VIMANA

Flying Machines of the Ancients

David Hatcher Childress

Adventures Unlimited Press

Krishna and Arjuna in Arjuna's vimana.



Thanks to the many people who have helped me in researching and finishing this book including Jennifer Bolm, Christopher Dunn, Andrew Tomas, Ramachandra Dikshitar and many others.

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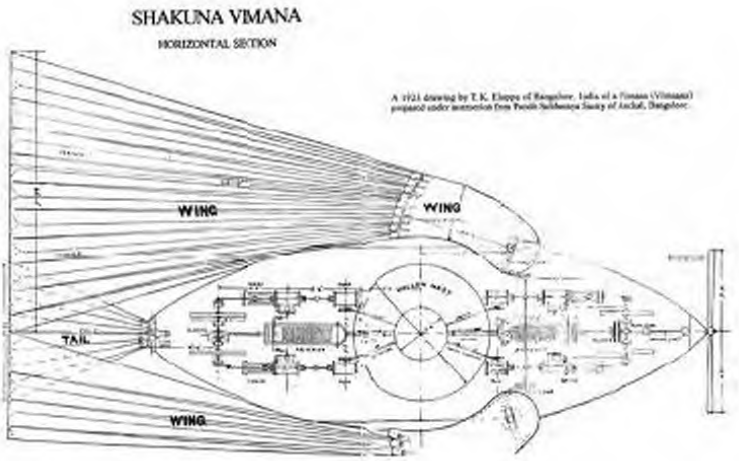
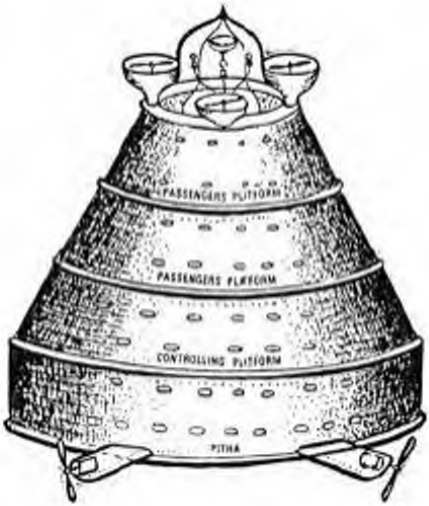




A 1923 conceptional drawing of the Rukma vimana.

A map of ancient India showing important spots associated with the Rama Empire.

A rock-carved relief from the Ajanta caves of a vimana flying through the air.

CHAPTER ONE

THE STRANGE WORLD OF ANCIENT INDIA

Kill, therefore, with the Sword of Wisdom, the doubt born of ignorance that lies in thy heart. Be one in self-harmony, in yoga—and arise, great warrior, arise!
—Krishna to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita* (4:42) *(Mahabharata,* Book 6: *Bhishma Parva)*

The subject of ancient technology has always fascinated me and the subject of vimanas has always been an important part of this discussion, at least for me. Here was a topic that covered everything from lost cities, ancient flight, super-charged weapons and the struggle between good and evil—with the participation of superheroes, supernatural demons, wookie-like apemen who fight on the side of good, and some hot babes on top of all that. Seems like we have a good story here, in the tales of the mysterious Rama Empire and all of its rather wacky struggles for respect and female virtue, that seems more like a Flash Gordon movie than one of the most important religious sagas of all time. We call this story the *Ramayana*. The other fabulous ancient Indian epic is the *Mahabharata,* which is a series of 18 books, and includes aerial warfare and the use of flying machines known in Sanskrit as "vimanas." For clarification, an abbreviated version of the *Ramayana* appears in the *Mahabharata* as part of its story-in-a-story writing style. However, the *Ramayana* is really a completely separate book and the events of the *Ramayana* take place before the battles detailed in the *Mahabharata*.

Also, versions of the *Ramayana* in Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia differ slightly from the standard Indian version, mainly on points regarding the purity of women and remarriage, of which the Southeast Asia version is more liberal. Indeed, in both the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata,*

the story lines are centered on the complicated marriage and betrothal issues in ancient India, and the dynastic succession of royal families in the many kingdoms—a collection of ancient states that were advanced in technology and culture. While modern European scholars have assumed that these countries were all located along the rivers of northern India, their actual distribution about Asia—and the world—is debated by Hindu scholars. They have put some of the historical events in the ancient Indian epics as far away as the Arctic Circle, Afghanistan, and island cities somewhere far outside of the Indian subcontinent. Indeed, certain ancient kings were described as ruling the entire earth, and some as the "Rulers of Three Planets," presumably meaning the three planets of Earth, Mars and another which is sometimes called Tiamat (from Sumerian texts) or Planet X. This is supposedly the missing planet between Mars and Jupiter that is now the asteroid belt—an exploded planet perhaps?

§§§

The Strange World of Ancient India

When one looks at the story told in the *Ramayana*, it is an entertaining and amazing story of dynastic succession: who is going to marry whom; who is going to next in line to be king; and who gets to drive the hot-rod vimana to either steal the hot chicks or get them back. It has all the elements of a soap opera where the main characters own some sort of flight/airline companies that use their fleet of aircraft (which are armed with weapons) to fly around the world while they carry on their sexual shenanigans and aristocratic rivalries involving status and family disputes and duty. In fact, in the both the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* the bad guys aren't really that bad at all, but just dutiful princes who adore lord Shiva but do things their own way, including grabbing the women they want.

Undeciphered seal from the Indus Valley Civilization.

The whole story of the *Ramayana* is set in a time before the popular Lord Krishna and the battles of the *Mahabharata*. The *Ramayana* is a wildly-popular tale in India, Nepal, Thailand, Sri Lanka and throughout the Buddhist and Hindu world, but it is nothing short of a lot of petty fights in the order of family succession, who gets which girl among a bunch of spoiled aristocrats—and ultimately if a woman gone bad (kidnapped, officially, in the story told in the *Ramayana)* can be rehabilitated and return to her former land and her former husband and take up a normal life with them. The female protagonist, Sita, does do all this, however, it takes some years and tribulations before she, and lover-boy, Rama, can get it back together—even briefly—to enjoy the nuptial bliss they once had.

Yes, all Hindus and Buddhists, over a billion of them, know this story—it is inspirational, teaches virtues and is exciting all at the same time. And it includes vimanas—flying machines that must be controlled by an operator and include sophisticated weapons systems that can be used by the operator at any time.

The world of ancient India as portrayed in ancient texts is a marvelous

land of great cities, powerful rulers, occasional wars and incredible technology, including flying machines. However, this world is in great contrast with the world of ancient India that is portrayed in our current history books. Ancient India was much larger than the country of India today, spreading from the borders of Iran-Persia to include Afghanistan, the Indus Valley and the entire Indian subcontinent to the Burmese border. Ancient India is said to be one of the oldest and most influential empires on our planet. But how old is ancient India?

Standard sources, like the Encyclopedia Britannica, say that India had a prehistoric period starting around 8000 BC, then a period of agriculturalists and pastoralists to 4000 BC and then the start of the Harappan, or Indus Valley, civilization around 3500 BC. This Harappan civilization, named after an ancient city of that name in the Indus Valley, came to end around 2000 BC, or even as late as 1750 BC, says the Encyclopedia Britannica. Let's have a look at this basic history of India and then look at it in the context of vimanas.

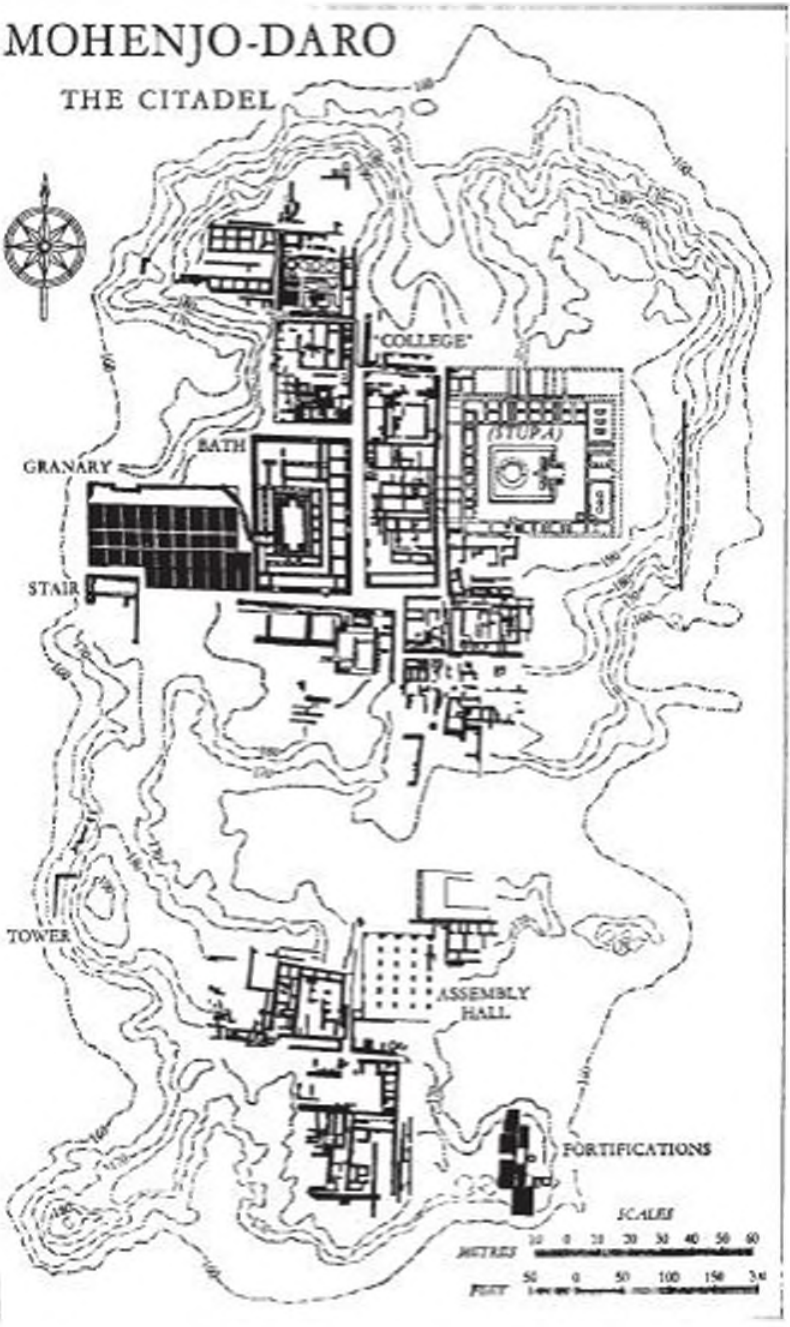
§§§

The Indus Valley Civilization

Modern historians tell us that this is the oldest civilization in the area, beginning as river and canal settlements with brick houses in the Sind area of today's Pakistan. However, these river and canal settlements were not limited to the river systems: they had ports in the Indus Delta and along the coast of Gujarat. One of these port cities is Lothal, now several miles inland from the ocean, and another is Dwaraka, the city that the famous Hindu avatar Krishna is from. This city is known to be underwater off the modern city of Dwarka (spelled slightly differently) in the Indian state of Gujarat.

The Indus Valley Civilization was probably the largest in area of all the

known ancient civilizations, extending across what is today northern India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Baluchistan on the Persian border and as far south a Maharashtra state in India. It is speculated that the Indus Valley Civilization may have had a population of as many as five million people and was noted for their making fine bricks and ceramics, large multi-storied houses made of bricks and highly developed handicrafts and metallurgy with a good knowledge of and use of such metals as copper, lead, tin and bronze. Iron, supposedly, was unknown to them, though this cannot be certain because iron rusts and decays so quickly. Some iron objects, such as the famous iron pillar in New Delhi, are attributed to the Indus Valley Civilization. They were also well known for advanced hydrology works such roadside drainage systems, sewer systems and water control and good hygienic standards.


MOHENJO-DARO
THE CITADEL
"COLLEGE"
(STUPA)
BATH
GRANARY
STAIR
TOWER
ASSEMBLY HALL
FORTIFICATIONS
SCALES
METRES 10 0 10 20 30 40 50 60
FEET 50 0 50 100 150 200

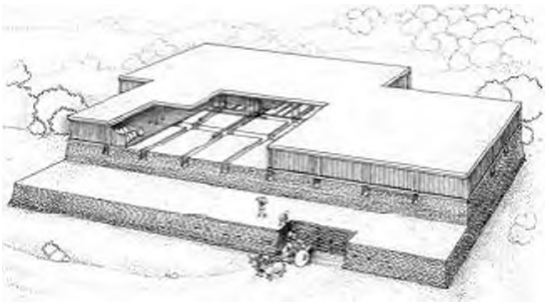
Preist King from Mohenjo Daro.

It was the discovery of the ruins at the lost city of Harappa in 1842 by a British engineer named Charles Masson that first brought the Indus Valley Civilization to the attention of archeologists. In that year, Masson published his *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan, and the Punjab,* in which he said that locals spoke of an ancient city extending "thirteen cosses" (about 25 miles).

In 1856, two brothers, John and William Brunton, were British engineers in charge of laying the East Indian Railway Company line that was scheduled to connect the cities of Karachi and Lahore. This section of the train ran through a very desolate desert area of the Indus, the Thar Desert, and

during the surveys of this little-inhabited area a number of ancient cities, covered in sand and dust, were discovered.

The brothers needed ballast for the railway track—building it up above the surrounding desert plain and putting down wooden railroad ties and then track—and except for a lot of sand from the desert around them, there wasn't much to work with. However, the well-fired bricks of the ancient cities around them would work as ballast for many miles of track that needed to be laid. The brothers were told of an ancient ruined city near the lines, called Brahminabad, and after visiting the city, they were "convinced that there was a grand quarry for the ballast I wanted." The city called Brahminabad was taken apart brick by brick and is now beneath the railway lines of Pakistan, to this day.



The reconstruction of a house at Mohenjo Daro.

The Great Bath at Mohenjo Daro.

A few months later, further north, William Brunton's "section of the line ran near another ruined city, bricks from which had already been used by villagers in the nearby village of Harappa at the same site. These bricks now provided ballast along 93 miles (150 km) of the railroad track running from Karachi to Lahore.[8]

Indeed, it would seem that the bricks from Harappa and Brahminabad were used in more than ballast for the railway but also in building signal boxes and even railway stations along the stretches through the desert. An advanced ancient civilization was being resurrected after thousands of years and helping to bring the Iron Horse to the northern areas of India.

With the building of the railroad, commerce began to flow back and forth through this desert area of India and certain artifacts began to make their way to archeologists and antiquity dealers. These objects were statuettes, seals and jewelry. Indus Valley Civilization seals were published in a scientific paper in London circa 1874. The archeologist Alexander Cunningham deemed the curious script to be "Brahmi letters." He has since been proven wrong and the deciphering of the script has yet to occur.

By 1912, more Harappan seals were found in the area and that prompted

an excavation campaign under Sir John Hubert Marshall in 1921–22. This expedition resulted in the official discovery of the civilization at Harappa. Most of Mohenjo-Daro had been excavated by 1931, but further expeditions continued to Harappa and elsewhere to look for more lost cities, such as that led by Sir Mortimer Wheeler, director of the Archaeological Survey of India, in 1944.

§§§

The Incredible Kurukshetra War of the Mahabharata

According to standard texts, ancient India moved into the Iron Age after the unexplained collapse of the Indus Valley Civilization. The Indus Valley Civilization flourished from about 3300 to about 1300 BC and it is not known what may have caused the collapse of this bronze-age civilization, leaving something of a thousand-year gap in Indian history from approximately 1300 BC to about 600 BC when iron-age India is said to have appeared. The writing system of the Indus Valley Civilization disappeared and many of the cities vanished or were destroyed in wars, such as though described in the *Mahabharata*. Some cities, as we shall see, seem to have vanished beneath the ocean.

It was about the time of the emergence of iron-age India, circa 600 BC, that India supposedly developed its earliest "modern" script, Brahmi, which the archeologist Alexander Cunningham erroneously believed the early Indus Valley glyphs to be. What is curious here is that there are huge gaps in the history of India that are difficult to fill, especially the historical period from 1300 to 600 BC. We simply do not know what went on in India during these years. What we do learn from the ancient Hindu epic the *Mahabharata* is that devastating wars were fought among various Hindu kingdoms in northern India—wars that completely wiped out certain cities and nations,

and brought the yuga of that time to an end (Indians mark time in a cyclical fashion, with four epochs, or "yugas," each with its own distinctive attributes, continuously replacing one another). The current Kali Yuga is said to have begun at the end of those fierce battles—collectively known in the *Mahabharata* as the Kurukshetra War.

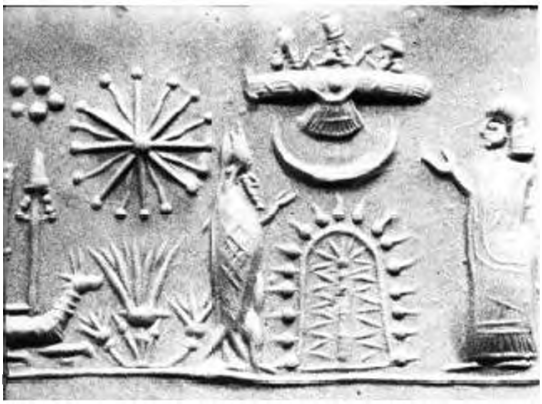
When Mohenjo Daro was excavated people were found lying dead in the street.

The *Mahabharata* is one of the two most important ancient Sanskrit epics in Indian literature, the other being the *Ramayana*. The *Mahabharata* is the longest Sanskrit epic consisting of over 200,000 individual verse lines. It has about 1.8 million words in total, and it is about four times the length of the *Ramayana* (which we will discuss at length in a later chapter) and roughly ten times the length of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined. It has been said by many historians that the *Mahabharata* is as important to civilization as the Bible, the works of Shakespeare or the Greek epics. The title can be best translated as "Tale of the Bharata Dynasty."

The *Mahabharata* is traditionally ascribed to the sage Vyasa. This wise

rishi, or holy man, is also a major character in the epic, especially at the beginning. In the first section of the epic, it is stated that it was the god Ganesha (with the elephant head) who wrote down the text to Vyasa's dictation. The *Mahabharata* uses the frametales structure of a "story within a story." This structure is common in many Indian religious and non-religious works. When the main story of the *Mahabharata* begins, it is recited to the King Janamejaya who is the great-grandson of the Pandava prince Arjuna, by a disciple of Vyasa, the sage Vaisampayana. Arjuna, as the story unfolds, is a major character and becomes a devoted disciple of Krishna, who is also a major character in the epic. At one point in the *Mahabharata* (Book Six) Krishna gives a long discourse to Arjuna and this chapter is popularly known as the *Bhagavad Gita* and is available as its own book, though it is essentially a chapter of the very long text of the *Mahabharata*.

Though there are many sub-plots and sub-stories in the *Mahabharata,* the main tale is the culmination of the Kurukshetra War and the vimanas and weapons that are used to devastate the cities of the combatants. But first, let us look at the build up to the big battle and the strange life of Krishna and the mysterious ancient river called the Sarasvati. The online encyclopedia Wikipedia makes this comment about the format and early pages of the epic:



Assyrian seal showing three men siting inside of a flying winged disk.

Jaya, the core of *Mahabharata* is structured in the form of a dialogue between [the] Kuru king Dhritarashtra and Sanjaya, his advisor and chariot driver. Sanjaya narrates each incident of the Kurukshetra War, fought in 18 days, as and when it happened. Dhritarashtra sometimes asks questions and doubts, and sometimes laments, sensing the imminent destruction that would be caused by the war, to his sons, friends and kinsmen. He also feels guilty about his own role in the lead-up to this war.

In the beginning, Sanjaya gives a description of the continents of the Earth, the other planets, and focuses on the Indian Subcontinent and gives an elaborate list of hundreds of kingdoms, tribes, provinces, cities, towns, villages, rivers, mountains, forests, etc. of the (ancient) Indian Subcontinent (Bharata Varsha). He also explains about the military formations adopted by each side on each day, the death of each hero and the details of each war. Some 18 chapters of Vyasa's Jaya constitutes the *Bhagavad Gita*, the sacred text of the Hindus. Thus, this work of Vyasa, called Jaya deals with diverse subjects like geography, history, warfare, religion and morality. According to the *Mahabharata* itself, Vaisampayana's

Bharata expanded on the story, with Vyasa's Jaya embedded within it. Ugrasrava eventually composed the final *Mahabharata*, with Vyasa's Jaya and Vaisampayana's Bharata embedded in the epic.

The very central plot is that of a dynastic struggle for the throne of Hastinapura, the kingdom ruled by the Kuru clan. This kingdom is apparently in northern India, somewhat north of current New Delhi. There are two branches of this family: the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Although the Kaurava family is the senior branch of the dynasty, the eldest Kaurava, a young prince named Duryodhana is younger than Yudhisthira, who is the eldest Pandava prince. Duryodhana and Yudhisthira are rivals and each claim to be first in line to inherit the throne of Hastinapura.

The 18 books of the *Mahabharata* are:

The *Mahabharata*, Book 1: Adi Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 2: Sabha Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 3: Vana Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 4: Virata Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 5: Udyoga

The *Mahabharata*, Book 6: Bhishma Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 7: Drona Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 8: Karna Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 9: Shalya Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 10: Sauptika Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 11: Stri Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 12: Santi Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 13: Anusasana Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 14: Aswamedha Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 15: Asramavasika Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 16: Mausala Parva

The *Mahabharata*, Book 17: Mahaprasthanika Parva
The *Mahabharata*, Book 18: Svargarohanika Parva

The first four books of the *Mahabharata* set the story for the rivalry between the prince Yudhishtira of the Pandava clan and the princes of the Kaurava clan. When Yudhishtira loses a dice game, which is played with loaded dice to cheat him, he loses all his wealth and then his kingdom. He then tragically gambles away his brothers, himself, and finally his wife into servitude. The Kauravas arrogantly taunt the Pandavas in their new state of servitude and try to disrobe Yudhishtira's wife in front of the entire court. Her honor is saved by Krishna who is among the witnesses to all these shenanigans and miraculously creates lengths of cloth to replace the ones being removed, and the woman is never completely naked before the court. Yudhishtira and the other Pandavas go into exile for 12 years and then Yudhishtira spends a year in disguise at the court of the Kaurava king Virata (Book 4: The Virata Parva).

Assyrian seal showing three men siting inside of a flying winged disk.

Books five through 10 of the *Mahabharata* describe the preparations for battle between the two sides and the four different battles that comprise the Kurukshetra War. It is these chapters that contain references to vimanas,

flight and powerful weapons that completely destroy entire cities in an instant. Books 11 through 15 chronicle the lamenting of the women for the many dead, the crowning of Yudhishtira as king of Hastinapura, and instructions from his elders given to the new king on society, economics and politics.

Book 16, the Mausala Parva, contains more battles that are the infighting and ultimate destruction of their enemies, the Yadavas. Books 17 and 18 detail a curious expedition into the Himalayas, where all of the Pandava princes, except for Yudhisthira, fall into gorges and are killed. A stray dog also follows them, who turns out to be a wise rishi (sage) in disguise. Yudhisthira is given a final test of his character, and finally all of the Pandavas unite in the spiritual world at the end of the book.

In the lead-up to the battles of Kurukshetra various relatives and clans, including Krishna and Arjuna, are made to take sides in the ever-increasing tension between the two rivals and their families, and eventually other nearby nations are called into the fighting that culminates at Kurukshetra. The lead-up to the battle weaves a complex story of dynastic succession, inheritance, family loyalty and duty. The characters struggle with these family conflicts leads to deep philosophical pondering of what is wrong and what is right. In some ways it is like a cross between a giant battle at a legendary place like Armageddon and the tragedy of the American Civil War, where families were torn apart by the opposing sides and brother literally fought against brother in a war of philosophy, duty and "doing what is right."

Assyrian seal showing a winged disk.

Assyrian seal showing a winged disk.

In the case of the American Civil War, we would probably say that the good guys, on the side of "what is right," won the war. That cannot necessarily be said of the Kurukshetra War, in which it seems that everyone pretty much lost—although there is a winner declared at the end. At the close of the great battle of Kurukshetra, a fantastic weapon known as the "Brahmastra" is used to end the war. Ultimately the Pandava princes are victorious and this silly, but incredibly destructive war was over. The Brahmastra weapon is like some super-missile with an atomic warhead. Could it have been an ancient atomic weapon?

Gurkha, flying in his swift and powerful vimana,
hurled against the three cities of the Vrishnis and Andhakas
a single projectile charged with all the power in the Universe.
An incandescent column of smoke and fire,
as brilliant as ten thousand suns,
rose in all its splendor...
it was an unknown weapon,
an iron thunderbolt,
a gigantic messenger of death,
which reduced to ashes

the entire race of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas.
... The corpses were so burned
as to be unrecognizable.
The hair and nails fell out;
Pottery broke without cause;
And the birds turned white...
... after a few hours
all foodstuffs were infected...
to escape from this fire
the soldiers threw themselves in streams
to wash themselves and their equipment.
—*Mahabharata* (Book 8, Karna Parva)

The Brahmastra Weapon

The Brahma-astra (astra is a suffix that means 'weapon') was a super-weapon created by Brahma, part of the Hindu Trinity along with Vishnu and Shiva. It was considered the ultimate weapon that destroyed everything, and there was only one defense against it, the Brahmadananda. Another weapon, known as the Brahmashira, was even more powerful. The main adversaries in the *Ramayana,* Rama and Ravana are said to have each used a Brahmashira in their epic battle, at a time many years earlier than the battle at Kurukshetra. Other super-weapons are "Rama's Arrow," the "trishul," and the "chakram,"—personal weapons of the gods, but apparently also used by normal humans in many fights with each other, often over who marries whom or who gets the seat of power after daddy dies— themes still common in India today.

Says Wikipedia in a typical definition of the Brahmastra weapon:

As described in a number of the *Puranas,* it was considered the

deadliest weapon. It was said that when the Brahmastra was discharged, there was neither a counter attack nor a defense that could stop it, except by Brahmadanda, a stick also created by Brahma. The Brahmastra never missed its mark and had to be used with very specific intent against an individual enemy or army, as the target would face complete annihilation. It was believed to be obtained by meditating on the Lord Brahma; it could only be used once in a lifetime. The user would have to display immense amounts of mental concentration. According to ancient Sanskrit writings, the Brahmastra is invoked by a key phrase or invocation that is bestowed upon the user when given this weapon. Through this invocation the user can call upon the weapon and use it via a medium against his adversary.

Since Brahma is considered the Creator in Sanatana Dharma, it is believed by Hindus that Brahmastra was created by him for the purpose of upholding Dharma (and Satya), to be used by anyone who wished to destroy an enemy who would also happen to be a part of his (Brahma's) creation. The target, when hit by Brahmastra, would be utterly destroyed. Brahma had created a weapon even more powerful than the Brahmastra, called the Brahmashira. The Brahmashira was never used in war, as it had four times more power than the Brahmastra, i.e. Fourth power square, as the name suggests, since Brahma has Four Heads.

... The weapon was also believed to cause severe environmental damage. The land where the weapon was used became barren and all life in and around that area ceased to exist, as both women and men became infertile. There was also a severe decrease in rainfall with the land developing cracks, like in a drought.

The Brahmastra, described as an "iron thunderbolt," was apparently a fairly well known weapon in the sense that scores of them were possibly made—like nuclear warheads—and were in the possession of various

armies and kingdoms which occasionally desired to use them—though sometimes the gods stopped them from using these awesome weapons against each other in what seems to us today as rather petty conflicts.

The Harrapan port of Lothal in Gujerat, now miles from the ocean.

Wikipedia says that there are a number of instances in Sanskrit scriptures

where the Brahmastra is used—or threatened to be used:

- Vishvamitra used it against Vasishta, but the Brahmastra was swallowed by Brahmadanda, Lord Brahma's countermeasure against the Brahmastra. In the *Ramayana* a Brahmastra is used by Shri Rama as the "final blow" against Rakshasa Ravana during their battle in Lanka. Also, Indrajit used Brahmastra against Hanuman when he was destroying the Ashok Vatika after meeting Sita. Lakshmana (Shri Rama's younger brother) also tried to use it with Indrajit in the same battle, but Rama stopped him from using the weapon saying, "his use of the Brahamastra was not justified, nor would it benefit mankind." It is also mentioned in vedas that Brahmastra was aimed by Shri Rama to make way out of sea so that the army of apes can march towards Lanka, however at the very moment, Varuna appeared and told Lord Rama, about the technical flaws of using the weapon and hence later was aimed towards *Poorv* Disha—"East Direction" by Lord Rama. Also Indrajit aimed a Bhramastra at Lord Lakshaman on the final battle between him and Lord Lakshman, however deadly weapon returned unharmed.

  Prior to the Epic war of the war of the *Mahabharata*, Karna was planning to use the Brahmastra to fight Arjuna, but because of Parasurama's curse he was unable to do so.

The Brahmastra is also used in a confrontation of Arjuna and Ashwatthama in *Mahabharata*, where Arjuna retracts his weapon, as ordered to do so, but Ashwatthama is unable to retract his weapon and instead sends it to attack Arjuna's unborn grandson, named Parikshit. Parikshit. This confrontation is also said to have involved the Brahmashira, a four times more destructive weapon. In one version, Ashwatthama did not have his bow and arrow near him when he was confronted by Arjuna, so he took a piece of

straw and invoking the proper phrase, or activating the weapon with a special code, he threw the straw at Arjuna, and it carried the power of the Brahmashiras. In response, Arjuna also invoked the Brahmashira to counter Ashwatthama's—but the collision of two Brahmashiras would have destroyed the universel Therefore, the Rishi Vyas came bodily between the two Brahmashiras weapons, preventing them from colliding. Arjuna was able to call back his Brahmashira, but Aswathama did not know how to do this, so he commanded his weapon to attack the unborn grandchild of Arjuna, Parikshit, who is subsequently saved by the god-like powers of Krishna.

The events of the *Mahabharata* and the Kurukshetra War evidently take place in northern India and even Afghanistan. When the Indus Valley Civilization cities were finally excavated in the 1930s, 40s and 50s it was found that they had been completely destroyed, with people lying dead in the streets. Some sort of sudden doom had overtaken these cities, apparently killing everyone, leaving no one behind to bury the dead. This seems just like the *Mahabharata*'s description of the events in the Kurukshetra War. Was the Indus Valley Civilization the society that was destroyed in the Kurukshetra War? Were vimanas and powerful "iron thunderbolts" used in this horrific war between nations? It would seem so. Let's look at further evidence of the advanced nature of ancient India and surrounding areas.

The Mysterious River called the Sarasvati

A mysterious river called the Sarasvati is mentioned in the *Mahabharata* as well as in the Aryan-vedic book the *Rig Veda*. The Sarasvati is a very important river in ancient Indian texts but this river is nowhere to be found today. Scholars argue about the location of this river; although it was an important river, it seems to have dried up. It is typically identified with the Ghaggar-Hakra River, which shifted course in a major earthquake many thousands of years ago. This river eventually flowed into the deserts of

Rajastan and then into the Rann of Kutch, a swampy area of Gujarat state, a vast area where today the last Asian lion species manages to survive in protected areas. It is generally thought to have dried up around 1900 BC.

Assyrian seal showing a winged disk.

Says Wikipedia about the Sarasvati (people of different primary languages tend to contribute to these wiki pages, so don't be concerned about grammar):

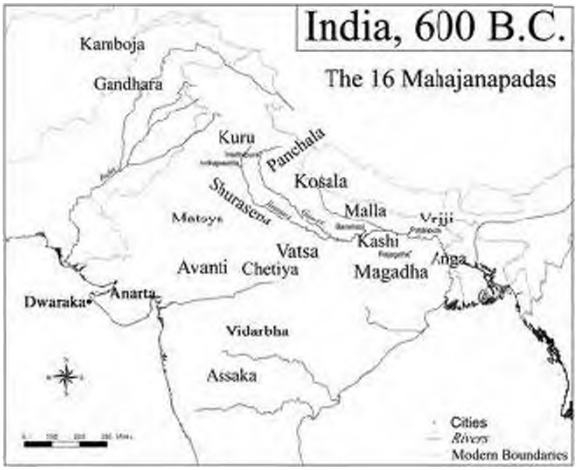
> The Sarasvati River is one of the chief Rigvedic rivers mentioned in ancient Sanskrit texts. The Nadistuti hymn in the *Rigveda* (10.75) mentions the Sarasvati between the Yamuna in the east and the Sutlej in the west, and later Vedic texts like Tandya and Jaiminiya Brahmanas as well as the *Mahabharata* mention that the Sarasvati dried up in a desert. The goddess Sarasvati was originally a personification of this river, but later developed an independent identity and gained meaning.
>
> The identification of the Vedic Sarasvati River with the Ghaggar-Hakra River was accepted by a number of scholars already in the 19th and early 20th century, including Christian Lassen, Max Müller, Marc Aurel Stein, C.F. Oldham and Jane Macintosh, while Rajesh Kochhar believes that the Helmand River of southern Afghanistan corresponds to the Sarasvati River. Proto-historian Michel Danino says that in ancient times a mature river flowed into the Ghaghar Akra valley and into the Rann of Kutch which he identifies as the Rig Vedic Sarasvati river.

According to geological and glaciological studies, Sarasvati was supposed to have originated in Bandapunch masiff (Sarawati-Rupin glacier confluence at Naitwar in western Garhwal). Descending through Adibadri, Bhavanipur and Balchapur in the foothills to the plains, the river took roughly a southwesterly course, passing through the plains of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and finally it is believed to have debouched into the ancient Arabian Sea at the Great Rann of Kutch. In this long journey, Saraswati was believed to have had three tributaries, Shatadru (Sutlej) arising from Mount Kailas, Drishadvati from Siwalik Hills and the old Yamuna. Together, they flowed along a channel, presently identified as that of the Ghaggar river, also called Hakra River in Rajasthan and Nara in Sindh. The rivers, Saraswati and Ghaggar, are therefore supposed to be one and the same, though a few workers use the name Ghaggar to describe Saraswati's upper course and Hakra to its lower course, while some others refer Saraswati of weak and declining stage, by the name Ghaggar.

Palaeo-drainage network formed by several palaeochannels has been worked out by different researchers in western Rajasthan and neighboring states, which is mainly buried under sand cover of the Thar Desert and parallel to the Aravalli Hills. In the last couple of years with the advancement in satellite and remote sensing technology, palaeochannels have been mapped systematically. Different workers have different opinions about the number of courses of Saraswati River. Ghosh et al. reported five, Yashpal et al. reported one, Bakliwal and Grover reported seven. On the basis of aerial photographs and Landsat imagery, faults/ lineaments and palaeo-drainage system in NW India have been delineated. Several authors have opined that upliftment of the Aravallis led to the westward migration of Saraswati River system due to fault-controlled movements. The faults have been and continue to be active, registering various

sideways and up–down movements in the geological past. As a consequence, there was uplift and sinking or horizontal (lateral) displacement of the ground. Under such tectonophysiographic upheavals, the rivers and streams were frequently forced to change their courses, sometimes gradually, sometimes abruptly, as seen on satellite images.

Recent Hindu belief, and popularly known in India today is that the ancient Saraswati River still flows underground in northern India and meets Yamuna and Ganges Rivers where they meet at Allahabad, making the Sarawati a third, but hidden, river meeting at this confluence.



If we could somehow date when this river suddenly shifted its course, becoming part of the Ganges River system for a time and then basically drying up entirely, we would get a good idea of when the Kurukshetra War took place. It would seem to be thousands of years ago, and as noted above it is generally believed by geologists that the Saraswati dried up around 1900 BC.

Many modern historians—though not so much Indian-Hindu scholars—date the Kurukshetra War as taking place during India's sudden resurgence in the Iron Age of India around 600 BC, but it would seem that the Kurukshetra War and Sarasvati River were long before that. It was around 600 BC that these stories, told for thousands of years, were written down in Brahmi script. Both the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* make it clear in their early chapters that their stories are from long ago, in the case of the *Ramayana*, from when the entire world was ruled by Rama and other kings in succession. Is it possible that events in the *Ramayana* involved the entire world, in a similar manner to WWII? It seems incredible, but that is what the ancient texts say.

Another way to try to find a date for the Kurukshetra War is to look at the city where Krishna is said to be from. This would be Dwaraka, a coastal city once in Gujarat—now underwater—and a known city of the Indus Valley Civilization.

§§§

The Sunken City of Dwaraka and Krishna the Blue Man

In our quest for the lost world of ancient India—an advanced world that somehow matches the amazing world described in the Indian Epics—we can look to the fabled port city of Dwaraka, now confirmed by modern archeologists as being underwater off the coast of Gujarat in northwest India.

The name Krishna means "dark blue or black," and he is revered in the *Mahabharata* as an avatar of Vishnu from the Hindu Trinity, and as a divine hero, prankster, model lover, and in his youth, a god-child. He is youthful, energetic and fun-loving; he does not fall for convention, and in a sense plays by his own rules. This is of considerable interest since much of the

over-wordy text of the *Mahabharata* (and *Ramayana)* is about duty to family and obeying the strict customs of one's time, such as in marriage. Krishna does not follow any of these rules and is known as quite the playboy, musician and all-around fun guy. Being a demi-god, he can kick your ass if he wants to, but he prefers playing tricks on people instead (or making love to them, as he was often known to do, even taking on scores of women at a time).

In fact, Krishna cleverly does not take direct part in the Kurukshetra War, but instead serves as Arjuna's vimana or chariot driver, and does not wield a weapon. He lectures Arjuna on all sorts of things while driving his vimana/chariot and these lessons form what is known as the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Krishna starts out as a baby who is supposedly of a virgin birth, similar to biblical stories, however his mother was not a virgin as she had already borne seven other children. The birth of Krishna, however, was not the result of human coupling—the breath of Vishnu supposedly entered his mother's womb and this avatar and hero came into the world. Krishna's birth date is given the Sanskrit name Janmashtami. According to Hindu tradition this date is July 18, 3228 BC. He is said to have departed in the year 3102 BC, which would have made him 126 years old. Krishna belonged to the Vrishni clan of Yadavas from Mathura, northern India. His clan is completely annihilated at the end of the Kurukshetra war. His parents are royal Vrishnis named Vasudeva (his father) and Devaki (his mother).

Although he is from the royal family of Mathura, the capital of the Yadavas, he ultimately ends up in the port city of Dwaraka in Gujarat. In a typical court intrigue of the time, his parents have been thrown in prison by a usurper king who is Devaki's brother because he has been told a prophecy that her eighth child (the yet-to-be-born Krishna) would cause his death. When Krishna is born, his parents have him smuggled out of prison and he grows up in the country working as a cow herder. During this time he plays

his flute, enjoys himself, plays pranks on people and foils various attempts on his charmed life. He kills a demoness who attempts to kill him and tames a giant snake that is causing problems in the Yamuna River.

Eventually, Krishna returns to the court of Mathura and overthrows his uncle by killing him. He installs another relative as king and lives at the court while various enemies try to kill him. He eventually leaves Mathura and takes a large group of followers with him to Dwaraka, where he establishes his own kingdom by creating an island, or building up an existing island and making a wonderful port city and city-state. Krishna is now the king of the city he has created (although there was apparently an earlier city here called Kususthali) and he marries Rukmini, who is a Vidarbha princess who is supposed to marry someone else. Krishna abducts her, at her request, and she becomes the first of his eight official wives. This theme of the the abduction of a woman who is about to marry someone else, or is married to someone else, is central in the *Ramayana*, though with a very different outcome.

The city of Dwaraka is also described as Dwaravati in the *Mahabharata* and is said to have been the capital of the Anarta Kingdom, which is roughly the Gujarat State of India today. Some historians maintain that Dwaraka and Anarta were two separate "mythical" kingdoms. Dwaraka was not destroyed in the Kurukshetra War and it is mentioned in the *Mahabharata* that Arjuna visits the city during his military campaigns after the war. Dwaraka would seem to be a very ancient city, but until recently, it was thought to be mythical, rather than a real place. Today, archeologists realize that ancient Dwaraka lies underwater off the coast of Gujarat, near the modern day city of Dwarka.

Graham Hancock in his book *Underworld*[7] says that Dwaraka was destroyed and submerged shortly after the Kurukshetra War according to Indian texts. He gets this from these lines in the Vishnu Purana:

On the same day that Krishna departed from the earth
the powerful dark-bodied Kali Age descended.
The Ocean rose and submerged the whole of Dwaraka.

So, Dwaraka is an ancient city, said to have been destroyed circa 3100 BC when Krishna left the earth and the Kali Yuga began. And this is but the start of another yuga according to Indian beliefs there have been many thousands of years of yugas and civilization before and many thousands to come. Says Hancock about the cyclic nature of history in Indian thought:

> Within this pattern of spiraling cycles, where everything that goes around comes around, India conceives of four great epochs or 'world ages' of varying but enormous lengths: the Krita Yuga, the Treta Yuga, the Davapara Yuga and the Kali Yuga. At the end of each *yuga* a cataclysm, known as pralaya, engulfs the globe in fire or flood. Then from the ruins of the former age, like the Phoenix emerging from the ashes, the new age begins.
>
> And so it goes on—birth, growth, fruition, death, rebirth—endlessly across time. At the end of each cycle of four ages there is a super-cataclysm and then a new cycle of *yugas* begins.
>
> ... Towards the end of the most recent Davapara Yuga, the texts tell us, Dwaraka was a fabulous city founded on the north-west coast of India. Established and ruled over by Krishna, it was built on the site of an even earlier sacred city, Kususthali, on land that had been reclaimed from the sea. 'Krishna solicited a space of twelve furlongs from the ocean, and there he built the city of Dwaraka, defended by high ramparts.' The gardens and the amenities of the city are praised, and we understand that it was a place of ritual and splendor.
>
> Years later, however, as the Davaparu Yuga comes to an end, Krishna is

killed. The Age of Kali thus ushered in turns out to be none other than the present epoch of the earth—our own. According to the Hindu sages it began just over 5000 years ago at a date in the Indian calendar corresponding to 3102 BC. It is an age, warns the Bhagvata Purana, in which people will be greedy, take to wicked behavior, will be merciless, indulge in hostilities without any cause, extremely covetous for wealth and worldly desires.[7]

Indeed, each yuga gets progressively worse, with the first yuga, the Krita Yuga being a golden age. People became less virtuous in the following Treta Yuga and more so in the Davapara Yuga. The awesome battles of the Kurukshetra War essentially end this period, which would have started circa 9,500 BC. The Treta Yuga before that would have begun at a date circa 16,000 BC.

What we might surmise from all this is that rather than the Kurukshetra War taking place around 600 BC, in India's so-called Iron-Age, it would have occurred before 3000 BC, prior to the sinking of the ancient city of Dwaraka off the coast of Gujarat. One would think such a grand city would exist for a few hundred years at least, making its establishment more like 3,500 BC or earlier.

It was reported in on May 19, 2001, on news outlets in India and around the world, that India's science and technology minister Murli Manohar Joshi announced the finding of ruins in the Gulf of Khambhat in Gujarat. Professor Joshi said that the underwater ruins, known as the Gulf of Khambhat Cultural Complex (GKCC), were located on the seabed of a 9-kilometer stretch off the coast at a depth of about 40 meters. The submerged site was discovered using acoustic techniques by an archeological team from India's National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) in December of the year 2000. This site was ultimately determined to be the lost of Dwaraka.

India's NIOT continued its investigations during November of 2001,

which included dredging the ocean bottom in order to recover artifacts. More work was done during 2003 and 2004 on the underwater site, and samples obtained of what was presumed to be pottery were sent to laboratories in Oxford, UK and Hannover, Germany, as well as several institutions within India, to be dated.

Strangely, however, some of the artifacts that were dredged up in 2001 were dated as far back as 7500 BC! Says a brief Wikipedia article on the initial discoveries:

> One of the main controversies is a piece of wood that was carbon dated to around 7500 BCE, a date which is used in arguments for a very early date for a city here. Dr. D.P. Agrawal, chairman of the Paleoclimate Group and founder of Carbon-14 testing facilities in India stated in an article in Frontline Magazine that the piece was dated twice, at separate laboratories. The NGRI in Hyderabad returned a date of 7190 BC and the BSIP in Hannover returned a date of 7545-7490 BC. Some archeologists, Agrawal in particular, contest that the discovery of an ancient piece of wood does not imply the discovery of an ancient civilization. Agrawal argues that the wood piece is a common find, given that 20,000 years ago the Arabian Sea was 100 meters lower than its current level, and that the gradual sea level rise submerged entire forests.

With the date of circa 7,200 BC for artifacts from the supposed sunken city of Dwaraka, we may have another possible date for the vimanas and weapons of the Kurukshetra War—an astonishing 9,000 or 10,000 years ago! This is a period of time that we associate with Plato's Atlantis, circa 8000 or 9000 or 10,000 BC. So what date for the Kurukshetra War and Krisha's wonderful city of Dwaraka: 600 BC; 1800 BC; 3000 BC; or 7200 BC? It boggles the mind! These dates are for the war itself and not necessarily

the date of the *Mahabharata* epic, which would be more recent. Its origin, like the Aryan vedic book, the *Rig Veda,* is in far pre-history and both were memorized for thousands of years by specially trained priest-librarians. Graham Hancock mentions that the Rig Veda, especially, was traditionally memorized and there was a certain resistance to writing it down, even when writing was available, which was certainly by 600 BC, and even before, with the as-yet undeciphered Harrappan script.[7]

§§§

A City of Gold Towers and Crystal Balconies

The city which Krishna builds at Dwaraka is pretty fantastic, using the architect of the gods, a mysterious person named Tvastr. His island city is large—96 miles in area—and has skyscrapers with gold towers in it. Somewhere apparently, must be an airport. In many ways, ancient Dwaraka sounds very much like modern Singapore, a sophisticated city state of skyscrapers and commerce built on an island with a world-class airport. In the *Bhagvata Purana* we are told this of Krishna and the city of Dwaraka:

> ... the lord caused a fortress constructed in the western sea. In the fortress he had built a city twelve yojanas [96 miles] in area and wonderful in every respect.
>
> The building of the city exhibited the expertise in architecture and the skill in masonry of Tvastr, the architect of the gods. The roads, quadrangles, streets and residential areas were constructed in conformity to the prescribed tenets of the science of architecture pertaining to city building.
>
> In that city, gardens planted with celestial trees and creepers and wonderful parks were laid out. It was built with sky-scraping, gold-towered

buildings and balconies of crystals. It had barns built out of silver and brass which were adorned with gold pitchers. The houses therein were of gold and big emeralds.

This amazing vision of a city of skyscrapers with gold towers is like some great Solomon's Temple with gold walls combined with impressive fortified island-cities like Carthage, Byblos, Amsterdam or Dubrovnik, or even the capital of fabled Atlantis with its many concentric canals and large walls.

The lost world of ancient India also includes the Vidarbha kingdom, which Krishna's first wife, Rukmini, was from. Vidarbha is mentioned in the *Mahabharata* as the southernmost kingdom of the Yadava kings. Vidabha, whose capital city was said to be called Kundinapuri, was the only nation to manage to stay neutral during the Kurukshetra War. Though it is said in the *Mahabharata* that the king of Vidarbha offered his services to both sides—the Pandavas and the Kauravas—these offers were not accepted and his kingdom remained neutral throughout the many hostilities.

So, how shall we paint a portrait of the wonderful world of ancient India as portrayed in the Indian Epics? Rather than a world of ox carts and spear-throwing cattle herders coming to fight like a bunch of Huns and Vandals on some dusty plain of antiquity, we have a world that includes airships, magnificent cities, huge ships that traverse the entire earth—a worldwide network of civilizations that once spanned the globe. This worldwide network of civilizations had advanced agriculture, hydraulic systems, ship-building and navigation, plus the ability to build with giant blocks of stone and to fly through the air in vimanas.

Yes, they would have had some sort of electricity and knowledge of all the metals and elements, just as we do today. I'm often asked where the theoretical ancient vimana or steam engine or steam shovel of ancient times is today? Why don't we discover some ancient vehicle in a sand dune in the

desert or in a cave in the mountains? A good question, and such discoveries have reportedly been made (to be discussed in a later chapter) but the problem with most machines, including airships and heavy machinery, is that they have to be built out of some sort of iron or steel or alloy of such, and these metals will quickly oxidize and turn to red dust unless kept in a virtually airless and dry climate. The famous iron pillar that is today in a suburb of New Delhi is one object that some have said is a relic from the time (or one of the times) that ancient India had especially advanced metallurgical knowledge.

Sadly, most metal objects will oxidize and decay over a period of a few hundred years and no bulldozer, airplane, backhoe, truck or tractor will remain for more than 200 years without corroding. Gold on the other hand does not decay, and gold is essentially indestructible. All gold from ancient times still exists today and much of the gold used in jewelry until recent times was probably recycled gold of the ancients. Gold is too soft to be used in machines, though it is very useful in electrical devices. Even alloys with gold in them are generally too soft for any practical purpose except jewelry. Only very hard metals like bronze, iron, and modern super-metals and alloys like stainless steel and titanium can be used for machines.

But it was probably not a consumer culture of different models and brands to buy, but nonetheless a culture with gigantic buildings, large ocean-going ships, carts and chariots drawn by horses or other animals, and—yes—vimanas to fly through the air with. These vimanas could be fitted with a dizzy array of awesome weapons we are told. In the next chapter let us look at some of the ancient texts and what they say specifically about vimanas and their use.

A map of India during the time of Asoka (circa 200 BC).

A map of the Indian subcontinent circa 1200 AD.

CHAPTER TWO

VIMANAS MENTIONED IN ANCIENT TEXTS

In these dusty books, which the student doesn't bother to consult until the eve of the exam, there are marvels, miracles!
— H.G.Wells, *The Invisible Man*

An aerial car is made of light wood looking like a great bird with a durable and well-formed body having mercury inside and fire at the bottom. It has two resplendent wings, and is propelled by air. It flies in the atmospheric regions for a great distance and carries several persons along with it. The inside construction resembles heaven created by Brahma himself. Iron, copper, lead and other metals are also used for these machines.
— the *Samarangana Sutradhara of Bhoja*

Throughout history there have been many well-known myths and legends of flying machines or devices—the familiar flying carpets of ancient Arabia; biblical figures such as Ezekiel and Solomon flying from place to place; Moses and the Israelites following a "pillar of fire" and the "magical chariots" in the sky; vimanas in ancient India as well as China and Southeast Asia.

The Chinese have their own legends of flight, including a legendary flying chariot belonging to an ancient Chinese prince, and the more recent Wan Hoo of the 16th century AD—the first rocket man to attempt a trip to the moon. He allegedly built a sturdy wooden framework around a comfortable chair and attached 47 skyrockets to the back of the seat. Atop it he fastened two large kites. After strapping himself to the chair, he raised his hand and servants carrying blazing torches advanced toward the vehicle and ignited

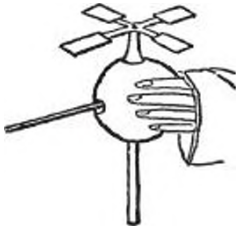
the skyrockets. A moment later there was a mighty blast, followed by an impressive cloud of black smoke. Wan Hoo vanished, leaving nothing behind but a legend.[88]

Chinese annals relate that the Emperor Shun (c. 2258-2208 BC) constructed not only a flying apparatus but even made a parachute about the same time as Daedalus of Greek legend built his gliders.[24]

There was also Emperor Cheng Tang (1766 BC) who ordered a famous inventor named Ki-Kung-Shi to design a flying chariot. The pioneering aviation constructor completed the assignment and tested the aircraft in flight, supposedly reaching the province of Hunan in his flying machine, possibly a glider. Subsequently, the vessel was destroyed by imperial edict as Cheng Tang was afraid that the secret of its mechanism might fall into the wrong hands.

A UPI report by Tony Samstag originating in Oslo, Norway in the early 1980s was entitled "Hunt for 1633 Rocket" and was a brief article about how Norwegian and Turkish scientists hoped to collaborate in finding "history's first manned rocket" from beneath the Bosphorus Straits of Turkey. According to the story, records in the Topkapi Museum said that the rocket, fueled by gun powder, was fired in 1633 with a pilot named Hasan Celebi aboard. The 10-foot-long projectile had a central fuel-driven motor with six smaller engines fastened on the outside. Said Norwegian engineer Tore Thoerud, "It is not immediately clear where the pilot sat as he flew 300 metres (980 feet) over the Bosphorus before launching himself in the world's first hang-glider."

The Chinese rocket pioneer Wan Hoo gets ready to take off into history.



Chinese design for "dragonfly" flight.

Yet it is apparent that the vimanas of ancient times were not powered by rocket technology. They were either blimp-zeppelin-type ships, or winged aircraft, they may even have had some sort of electrical vortex technology that caused them to fly in a manner similar to a gyroscope or flying saucer. Indeed, flying saucers or flying shields have been described in a number of texts. A curious incident along this line is told by 1950s radio host and author Frank Edwards in *Stranger Than Science*.[19] He says that Alexander the Great's invasion force was stopped at the Indus River by an odd historical event: "flying shields" or discoid aircraft were buzzing the groups of war elephants that were part of Alexander's army, and made them stampede. After

this spooking, Alexander's generals refused to continue with the invasion of the Indian subcontinent. Alexander's army turned around and began the long march back through Afghanistan and Persia to Babylon and ultimately Greece and the eastern Mediterranean. Alexander died in 323 BC in Babylon, possibly poisoned. His body was brought back to Alexandria but his tomb is lost. Did Alexander and his army have an encounter with some vimanas that were still operational over the centuries?

Among the more famous ancient texts that mention aerial cars—vimanas—besides the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are the *Samarangana Sutradhara*, the *Yuktikalpataru* of Bhoja (11th century AD) the *Mayamatam* (attributed to the architect Maya who is celebrated in the *Mahabharata*), the *Rig Veda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Ataharvaveda*.

The *Ramayana* describes a vimana as a double-deck, circular (cylindrical) aircraft with portholes and a dome. It flew with the "speed of the wind" and gave forth a "melodious sound" (a humming noise?). Ancient Indian texts on vimanas are so numerous it would take several books to relate everything they have to say.

The First Space Programs

Some ancient texts recount not just the appearance of ancient craft, such as in Ezekial's biblical vision, but actual eyewitness accounts of going into outer space. The 4,700-year-old Babylonian *Epic of Etana* contains the poem of the Flight of Etana:

> "I will take you to the throne of Anu," said the eagle. They had soared for an hour and then the eagle said: "Look down, what has become of earth!" Etana looked down and saw that the earth had become like a hill and the sea like a well. And so they flew for another hour, and once again Etana looked down: the earth was now like a grinding stone and the sea

like a pot. After the third hour the earth was only a speck of dust, and the sea no longer seen.

The *Book of Enoch,* a seminal work that has never been included in the biblical canon but inspired many of the ideas that appear in other books of the Bible, contains a passage that also seems to describe spaceflight:

And they lifted me up into heaven... (14:9)

And it was hot as fire and cold as ice... (14:13)

I saw the places of the luminaries... (17:3)

And I came to a great darkness... (17:6)

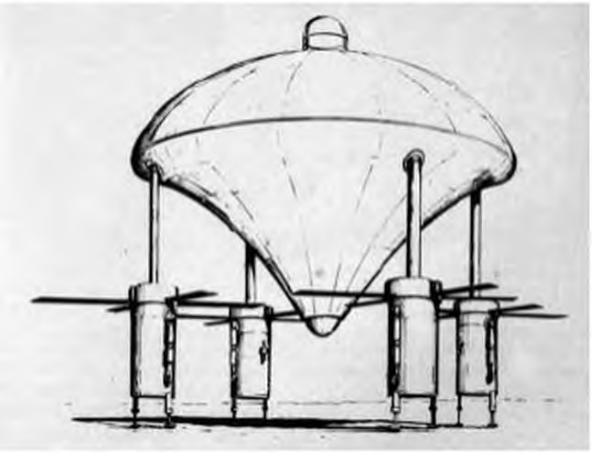
I saw a deep abyss. (17:11)

Does this not sound like a graphic account of a trip into space? It is a dark abyss, where objects get hot on the side illuminated by the sun and icy cold on the shaded side. And it is the abode of the sun, moon, planets, and the stars, as Enoch said.

In the second century AD, Lucian, the Greek author who visited Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt, wrote his novel *Vet-a Historia*. He drew a picture of a voyage to the moon which anticipated the American space program: "Having thus continued our course through the sky for the space of seven days and as many nights, on the eighth day we descried a sort of earth in the air, resembling a large, shining circular island, spreading a remarkably brilliant light around it."[44]

Author Andrew Tomas tells the story of how Chinese historical tradition mentions Hou Yih (or Chih-Chiang Tzu-Yu), the engineer of Emperor Yao who was acquainted with astronautics. In the year 2309 BC he decided to go to the moon on a celestial bird. This bird advised him of the exact times of the rising, culmination, and setting of the sun. Was it the equipment of a spaceship that provided this information to the prehistoric astronaut? Hou Yih explored space by "mounting the current of luminous air." The exhaust

of a fiery rocket?



A conceptual drawing of Ezekial's Wheel as a propeller craft.

Hou Yih flew into space, where "he did not perceive the rotary movement of the sun." This statement is of paramount importance in corroborating the story because it is only in space that man cannot see the diurnal movement of the sun.

On the moon the Chinese astronaut saw the "frozen-looking horizon" and built there the "Palace of Great Cold." His wife Chang Ngo also dabbled in space travel. According to the ancient writings of China, she flew to the moon, which she found, in her words, a "luminous sphere, shining like glass, of enormous size and very cold; the light of the moon has its birth in the sun."

Tomas goes on to mention another old Chinese book, *The Collection of Old Tales,* compiled in the fourth century AD. The book includes an interesting story from the time of Emperor Yao when Hou Yih and Chang Ngo went to the moon. An enormous ship appeared on the sea at night with brilliant lights that were extinguished during the day. It could also sail to the

moon and the stars, hence its name "a ship hanging among the stars" or "the boat to the moon." This giant ship that could travel in the sky or sail the seas was seen for 12 years.[24]

§§§

The ancient Indians themselves apparently wrote entire flight manuals on the control of various types of vimanas, of which there were as many as five different types including: the Pushpaka vimana; the Shakuna Vimana; the Sundara Vimana; the Rukma Vimana; and the Tripura Vimana.

Says the *Ramayana* about the Pushpaka vimana:

> The Pushpaka vimana that resembles the Sun and belongs to my brother was brought by the powerful Ravana; that aerial and excellent chariot going everywhere at will. that chariot resembling a bright cloud in the sky. and the King [Rama] got in, and the excellent chariot at the command of the Raghira, rose up into the higher atmosphere.

The great British/American biologist, author and researcher Ivan T. Sanderson wrote in his 1970 book *Invisible Residents* (reprinted by AUP)[17] that a curious text called the *Samarangana Sutrahara* seemed to describe a spinning flying saucer of some type. Sanderson, who also makes reference to Desmond Leslie, the British co-author of George Adamski's classic 1953 book *Flying Saucers Have Landed*,[6] says that the *Samarangana Sutradhara* is a technological text of a type called *Manusa:*

> It is, moreover, from these authenticated texts, mostly in poetic form, that some truly astonishing concepts have been derived. Poetic they may be; and nothing more than myth, legend, or folklore may they purport to

record; but they make statements that are more than just surprising. Several are, what is more, couched in perfectly straightforward terms and are, time and time again, stated to be not legendary but technological, and thus called *Manusa*. These are said by the writers to explain how certain devices were constructed for aerial flight, but not how to so construct them because the inventors and the establishment did not want such things to be mass-produced and get into the hands of any other than the rulers, commonly called "kings" and "princes." What is more, among the non-technical works devoted to the more poetic stories, and known as *Daiva,* there would appear to be more than ample suggestion, if not evidence, that such airships could be and were put to the most gruesome and devastating use in wartime.

These texts make most fascinating reading, but being unable to read the originals or copies of them in the language in which they were written, I appealed to friends who were either Orientals themselves or students of Oriental literature. Among these was the late Dr. Ranjee Shahani, who at the time of his death was Professor of English Literature at Seton Hall University. Dr. Shahani had published considerably on these texts, and I derive most of the following from his works. At the same time, I quote certain passages as published (in translated form) by the British author, Desmond Leslie,[6] by kind permission of the author and publishers. From these sources we are told that:

In the *Manusa,* the most elaborate details for building (such aerial machines) are set down. The *Samarangana Sutradhara* says that they were made of light material, with a strong, well-shaped body. Iron, copper, and lead were used in their construction. They could fly to great distances and were propelled by air. This text, according to Leslie, devotes 230 stanzas to the building of these machines, and their uses in peace and war.

Sanderson then goes on to give this quote from the *Samarangana Sutra-hara* that comes from Leslie's 1954 book:

> Strong and durable must the body be made, like a great flying bird, of light material. Inside it one must place the mercury-engine with its iron heating apparatus beneath. By means of the power latent in the mercury which sets the driving whirlwind in motion, a man sitting inside may travel a great distance in the sky in a most marvelous manner.
>
> Similarly by using the prescribed processes one can build a vimana as large as the temple of the God-in-motion. Four strong mercury containers must be built into the interior structure. When these have been heated by controlled fire from iron containers, the vimana develops thunder-power through the mercury. And at once it becomes a pearl in the sky.
>
> Moreover, if this iron engine with properly welded joints be filled with mercury, and the fire be conducted to the upper part it develops power with the roar of a lion.

Sanderson then continues to comment on the important mention of the liquid metal mercury:

> Leslie and several others who at least tried to take a serious view of these odd statements subsequently indulged in some perfectly valid speculations as to just what the significance of mercury might be. These are both sensible and permissible but lead off into matters that do not concern us here. Needless to say, they did not encompass the basic observation that a circular dish of mercury revolves in a contrary manner to a naked flame circulated below it, and that it gathers speed until it exceeds the speed of revolution of said flame. I fancy that Mr. Leslie will be enchanted with this new observation.

Here is the projection of energy by an exceedingly simple process. Should the ancients have stumbled across this process—though how in the dickens they might have done so is almost beyond comprehension—they might well have followed up the lead and ended up by finding out how to tap and channel such energy. Take this lead far enough and one can suggest the development of an "engine" employing it and being put to use to do (as the engineers say) work.

Desmond Leslie's theme is that this was one type of engine developed for aerial flight, and he extrapolates therefrom to the suggestion that it may have been developed far enough for space travel, and that something on this principle powers some UFOs.

Sanderson was keenly interested in all sorts of mysteries, including UFOs and the ability of some craft to fly through the air and go underwater as well. He felt that the subject of vimanas was a credible ancient mystery and one that deserved greater attention. Sanderson's book came out in the early 1970s, basically during the popular Chariots of the Gods-Ancient Astronauts period. By the 1980s scholars in India were getting more interested in what their ancient texts said about space travel, ancient flight and vimanas.

At the World Space Conference on October 11, 1988 in Bangalore, India, as reported in the local newspaper *The Hindu,* an Italian by the name of Dr. Roberto Pinotti addressed the delegates and spoke on ancient Indian vimanas. After briefly telling them what vimanas were, he went on to say that the Tripura Vimana was powered by motive power generated by solar rays and had an elongated form similar to a modern blimp.

He went on to say that the "ancient Aryans knew the use of the element 'fire' as could be seen from their 'Astra' weapons that included soposamhara (a flame-belching missile), Prasvapna (which caused sleep) and four kinds of Agni Astras that traveled in sheets of flame and produced

thunder."

While Dr. Pinotti concluded his talk by telling the delegates that they should take the subject of vimanas seriously, he was really speaking to the foreign delegates, as most Indians, especially Hindus or those of religions derived from Hinduism such as Buddhism or Jainism, already believed that their ancestors had such technology.

Pinotti also mentioned the *Samarangana Sutradhara* is a scientific treatise dealing with every possible angle of air travel in a vimana. Pinotti said that there are 230 stanzas dealing with construction, takeoff, cruising for thousands of miles, normal and forced landings, and even possible collisions with birds.

> The elder child, Hiranyakasipu, was unafraid of death from anyone within the three worlds because he received a benediction from Lord Brahma. He was proud and puffed up due to this benediction and was able to bring all three planetary systems under his control.
>
> —*Bhagavad Gita (Mahabharata,* Book 6)

In Control of Three Planetary Systems?

There are many other ancient texts from India that provide fascinating and incredible information on the highly technological ancient world, of which ancient India was only a part. *The Bhagavad Gita* (known as Srimad-Bhagavatam to Hindus) is part of the *Mahabharata*. In text 19 of the Third Canto we read (as translated by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder of the Hari Krishna movement):

> The elder child, Hiranyakasipu, was unafraid of death from anyone within the three worlds because he received a benediction from Lord Brahma. He was proud and puffed up due to this benediction and was

able to bring all three planetary systems under his control.

That Hiranyakasipu was in control of three planetary systems is an incredible statement, and one that seems a bit out of line for a supposedly primitive people whose main interest was growing food, hunting and gathering and fending off wild animals. Yet, these "cavemen" were, by their own written records, quite sophisticated and in possession of not only aircraft, but spacecraft as well.

It is interesting to conjecture as to which three planetary systems they are talking about. It may be assumed that earth is one of these systems. Considering the fascinating photos of pyramids and other structures found on Mars by NASA, we may believe Mars to have been a planet worthy of "bringing under control." Perhaps Venus (sometimes referred to as Hesperus) is the third planet. Even more interestingly, perhaps this third planet is a planet that supposedly once existed between Mars and Jupiter, where the asteroid belt exists today. The populace of this planet allegedly blew it up many thousands of years ago, while playing around with some very dangerous and destructive technology—a lesson that the people of our planet at this point in time and space might well learn before we repeat such a cosmic disaster.

Bringing three planetary systems under control would seem to require the aforementioned physical travel in a spaceship. The fascinating book *Easy Journey To Other Planets* was written by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder of the ISCON movement. This book is about astral travel, however, and not about visiting other planets in mechanical devices.

One Sanskrit authority who has held to the idea of the vimanas of ancient Indian texts being genuine flying machines of the past is Dr. V. Raghavan, who wrote the classic book *Yantras or Mechanical Contrivances in Ancient India*.[96] This book was first published in 1952 by The Indian Institute of

Culture in Bangalore and was republished in 1956 with a second introduction by the author.

The short book, meant to be used as a school text by students of ancient Indian literature and science, is a reference to all kinds of mechanical contrivances (including robots, war machines and aircraft) mentioned in classical Indian literature. Dr. Raghavan, a professor at the University of Madras, answers his critics in the preface to the second edition (1956) by saying:

> Regarding these critics I only want to emphasize what I have clearly stated in the opening of my lecture as to my exact intention in presenting this material. In the whole thesis, I have not myself made any claim or argued that aeroplanes were roaring across the skies in ancient India. I have not pressed into service any unpublished manuscript said to exist in secret or private possession and claiming to contain precious information on the construction of Vimanas or aerial vehicles. I have, on the contrary, used only the most reputed works, the references to different yantras in which have to be explained, if one does not want to close his eyes to them.[96]

Indeed, Dr. Raghavan is possibly referring to such secret libraries as James Churchward, author of several books about the mysterious lost continent of Mu, claimed to have consulted (of dubious value to the scholar, certainly). All of Raghavan's references are from freely available sources. One need not turn to obscure sources on vimanas when a great deal of public material is available. Dr. Raghavan's question to those critics who object to his discussions of ancient Indian aircraft is, "What meaning do the critics propose to attach to the manifold yantra references in the epics... ?"[96]

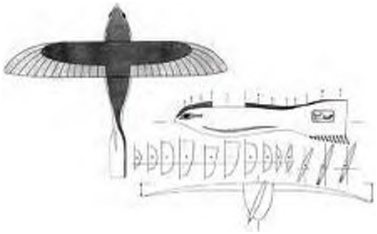


Diagram of the model glider from Sakkara.

The model glider from Sakkara.

Dr. Raghavan quotes many sources and his book is filled with classical stories of people and their flying machines, artisans whose specialty is to construct aircraft, and amusing tales of robots and other strange, exotic "contrivances." He quotes at length from the *Samarangana Sutradhara* attributed to the 11th century philosopher king Bhoja. As we have seen, this ancient text, "in many ways, a rare treatise in Sanskrit literature" according to Raghavan, is particularly revealing because it goes into great detail on the construction, propulsion and uses of aircraft. Bhoja, with Raghavan's commentary, gives certain details on the mercury engine that propelled the craft.

Dr. Raghavan also gives details on how vimanas were used to frighten war elephants, which were commonly used in skirmishes between clashing forces in ancient India—remember the story about Alexander the Great's elephants. He also discusses mechanical birds that flew, mainly toys and

amusement devices.

In 1898 a model was found in an Egyptian tomb near Sakkara. It was labeled a "bird" and cataloged as object 6347 at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. In 1969 Dr. Khalil Messiha was startled to note that the bird not only had straight wings, but also an upright tailfin. To Dr. Messiha, the object appeared to be a model airplane.

It is made of wood, weighs 39.12 grams and remains in good condition. The wingspan is 18 cm, the aircraft's nose is 3.2 cm long and the overall length is 14 cm. The extremities of the aircraft and the wingtips are aerodynamically shaped. Apart from a symbolic eye and two short lines under the wings, it has no decorations nor has it any landing legs. Experts have tested the model and found it airworthy.

After this sensational discovery, the Minister for Culture, Mohammed Gamal El Din Moukhtar, commissioned a technical research group to put other birds under the microscope. The team, nominated on Dec. 23, 1971, consisted of Dr. Henry Riad, Director of the Museum of Egyptian Antiquity; Dr. Abdul Quader Selim, Deputy Director of the Egyptian Museum for Archaeological Research; Dr. Hismat Nessiha, Director of the Department of Antiquities; and Kamal Naguib, President of the Egyptian Aviation Union. On January 12, 1972, the first exhibition of Ancient Egyptian model aircraft was opened in the Hall of the Egyptian Museum for Antiquities. Dr. Abdul Quader Hatem, Representative of the Prime Minister, and the Air Minister Ahmed Moh presented fourteen Ancient Egyptian model aircraft to the public. No longer on display, one assumes that they are now in a box in the basement of the museum somewhere.

Another curious exhibit at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo is a large display of boomerangs found in the tomb of King Tutankhamen. While boomerangs may not be models of ancient aircraft, they demonstrate that the Egyptians were highly interested in the mechanics of flight, as few

devices operate like a boomerang after being thrown. A number of Egyptian reliefs show Egyptians hunting with boomerangs.

Unfortunately, the progressive display of model planes from ancient Egypt did not have the profound impact one might expect. It has long been held by the pundits of higher learning that ancient texts, legends, traditions and even actual artifacts such as models and frescoes are not sufficient proof of anything, especially when it runs contrary to the established academic dogma.

§§§

The Controversial Book: *War in Ancient India*

Another book that mentions the *Samaragana Sutradhara* is the scholarly book by a historian from southern India named Ramachandra Dikshitar. His 1944 book (later republished by the Oxford University Press with an additional foreword) *War in Ancient India* contained a fascinating chapter entitled "Aerial Warfare in Ancient India" that had the scholars of his day looking at him through their spectacles with amusement. How could there have been aerial warfare in ancient India when quite obviously—as every scientist knows—the ancient Indians could not possibly have had airships.

Yet, the scholarly professor defended himself and said that he only wrote about these things because the ancient texts described such events as people flying in machines, well known as vimanas, and that these aircraft were also used in military actions. Aerial warfare, then and now, is an attractive option in that it is likely to inflict the most damage on the enemy with the least loss of life on the attacker's side. Aerial warfare, including the use of rockets and missiles, is a superior way to wage war, as long as one has that technology, advanced as it is.

Vishnampet R. Ramachandra Dikshitar was born in 1896 in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, and was a historian, Indologist and Dravidologist. He was a professor of history and archaeology at the University of Madras and authored a number of standard textbooks on Indian history. In 1928, he was appointed as a lecturer at the University of Madras. He was promoted to reader in 1946 and made Professor in 1947. Dikshitar specialized in Indian history in general, and Tamil history in particular. He was a renowned Sanskrit scholar of his time.

He published a number of scholarly books, including *Some Pandya kings of the thirteenth century* (1930); *The Śilappadikāram* (1939); *War in Ancient India* (1944); *Origin and Spread of the Tamils* (1947); *Pre-historic South India*

(1951); and others.

We can find an updated biography for him on his Wikipedia page:

> Ramachandra Dikshitar introduced a new methodology in the study of ancient Indian history. His book *Warfare in Ancient India* speaks of the usage of vimanas in wars in ancient India and claims that the boomerang was invented in South India. As a result, this book is widely referenced by the historians of the Sangh Parivar for its notes on vimanas and by Dravidologists for its theory on the origin of boomerangs.
>
> He believed that... *vimanas* were quite real as evidenced by his writings in *Warfare in Ancient India*.
>
> ... In his *Origin and Spread of the Tamils*, Dikshitar includes Australia and Polynesia among the regions known to the ancient South Indians thereby suggesting that South Indian traders might have at least had a general idea of existence of the Australian continent even before it was discovered by Portuguese and Dutch sea-farers of the 16th and 17th centuries.

So, we can see from this Wikipedia entry that Dr. Dikshitar was someone who did not follow the official dogma of his time and instead pursued the ancient texts—wherever they led him. Let us now look at what he concluded from the ancient texts in his book *War in Ancient India*.

The Contribution of Ancient India to the Science of Aeronautics

Dr. Dikshitar begins his chapter called "Aerial Warfare in Ancient India" with several paragraphs on how interesting it is that India was an early contributor to the then newly emerging science of aeronautics, including airplanes, zeppelins, blimps and other aircraft:

No question can be more interesting in the present circumstance of the world than India's contribution to the science of aeronautics. There are numerous illustrations in our vast Puranic and epic literature to show how well and wonderfully the ancient Indians conquered the air. To glibly characterize everything found in this literature as imaginary and summarily dismiss it as unreal has been the practice of both Western and Eastern scholars until very recently. The very idea indeed was ridiculed and people went so far as to assert that it was physically impossible for man to use flying machines. But today what with balloons, aeroplanes and other flying machines a great change has come over our ideas on the subject.

The use and value of air forces is not hard to assess. Their chief use lay until recently in the rapidity and skill with which the men flying did the scouting and reported to headquarters. They located the position of the enemy, which enabled them to direct the attack. We know from modern history that the French were the first to use balloons for this purpose. The discovery of aeroplanes has revolutionised the realm of strategy and tactics. The present World War has demonstrated that before the air arm everything else pales into insignificance.

Turning to Vedic literature, in one of the *Brahmanas* occurs the concept of a ship that sails heavenwards. The ship is the Agnihotra of which the Ahavaniya and Garhapatya fires represent the two sides bound heavenward, and the steersman is the Agnihotrin who offers milk to the three Agnis. Again in the still earlier *Rg Veda Samhita* we read that the Asvins conveyed the rescued Bhujya safely by means of winged ships. The latter may refer to the aerial navigation in the earliest times.

In the recently published *Samarangana Sutradhara* of Bhoja, a whole chapter of about 230 stanzas is devoted to the principles of construction underlying the various flying machines and other engines used for

military and other purposes. The various advantages of using machines, especially flying ones, are given elaborately. Special mention is made of their attacking visible as well a invisible objects, of their use at one's will and pleasure, of their uninterrupted movements, of their strength and durability, in short of their capability to do in the air all that is done on earth. After enumerating and explaining a number of other advantages, the author concludes that even impossible things could be affected through them. Three movements are usually ascribed to these machines—ascending, cruising thousands of miles in different directions in the atmosphere and lastly descending. It is said that in an aerial car one can mount up to the Suryamandala 'solar region' and the Naksatra mandala (stellar region) and also travel throughout the regions of air above the sea and the earth. These cars are said to move so fast as to make a noise that could be heard faintly from the ground. Still some writers have expressed a doubt and asked 'Was that true?' But the evidence in its favour is overwhelming.

The make of machines for offence and defense to be used on the ground and in the air is described. ...Considering briefly some of the flying machines alone that find distinct mention in this work, we find that they were of different shapes like those of elephants, horses, monkeys, different kinds of birds, and chariots. Such vehicles were made usually of wood. We quote in this connection the following stanzas so as to give an idea of the materials and size, especially as we are in the days of rigid airships navigating the air for a very long time and at a long distance as well.

The professor goes on to give some direct quotes, with sanksrit text and then his English translation beneath them. He then provides us with the famous text from the *Samarangana Sutradhara* of Bhoja that we have quoted previously:

An aerial car is made of light wood looking like a great bird with a durable and well-formed body having mercury inside and fire at the bottom. It has two resplendent wings, and is propelled by air. It flies in the atmospheric regions for a great distance and carries several persons along with it. The inside construction resembles heaven created by Brahma himself. Iron, copper, lead and other metals are also used for these machines.

Dr. Dikshitar goes on to defend himself in the face of the considerable criticism that was leveled at him when he first wrote about the sophistication and glory of ancient India, including aerial warfare:

All these show how far art was developed in ancient India in this direction. Such elaborate descriptions ought to meet the criticism that the vimanas and similar aerial vehicles mentioned in ancient Indian literature should be relegated to the region of myth.

The ancient writers could certainly make a distinction between the mythical which they designated *daiva* and the actual aerial wars designated *manusa*. Some wars mentioned in ancient literature belong to the *daiva* form, as distinguished from the *manusa*. An example of the *daiva* form is the encounter between Sumbha and the goddess Durga. Sumbha was worsted and he fell headlong to the ground. Soon he recovered and flew up again and fought desperately until at last he fell dead on the ground. Again, in the famous battle between the celestials and the Asuras elaborately described in the *Harivamsa,* Maya flung stones, rocks and trees from above, though the main fight took place in the field below. The adoption of such tactics is also mentioned in the war between Arjuna and the Asura Nivatakavaca, and in that between Karna and the Raksasa in both of which, arrows, javelins, stones and other missiles were freely

showered down from the aerial regions.

Dr. Dikshitar tells the tale of King Satrujit who is presented with a magic horse that can convey him anywhere on earth as he wishes and then discusses other "magical" conveyances including references in the *Ramayana:*

> King Satrujit was presented by a Brahman Galava with a horse named Kuvalaya which had the power of conveying him to any place on the earth. If this had any basis in fact it must have been a flying horse. There are numerous references both in the *Visnupurana* and the *Mahabharata* where Krsna is said to have navigated the air on the Garuda. Either the accounts are imaginary or they are a reference to an eagle-shaped machine flying in the air. Subrahmanya used a peacock as his vehicle and Brahma a swan. Further, the Asura, Maya by name, is said to have owned an animated golden car with four strong wheels and having a circumference of 12,000 cubits, which possessed the wonderful power of flying at will to any place. It was equipped with various weapons and bore huge standards. And in the battle between the Devas and the Asuras in which Maya took a leading part, several warriors are represented as riding birds.
>
> In the *Ramayana* when Ravana was flying with Sita in his aerial car to Lanka, Jatayu, a giant bird, charged him and his car and this led to a duel between the bird and the Raksasa king. Golikere draws attention to a number of instances where fierce duels have been fought between man and bird of prey resulting in the damage of the aeroplane and its inmates, in some cases leading to a forced landing. Again, the Raksasa Dronamukha offers his services to Ravana in his encounter with the vanara hosts to fight them either on the sea or in the sky or in subterranean regions. After the great victory of Rama over Lanka, Vibhisana presented him with the Pushpaka vimana which was furnished with windows,

apartments, and excellent seats. It was capable of accommodating all the vanaras besides Rama, Sita and Laksmana. Rama flew to his capital Ayodhya pointing [out] to Sita from above the places of encampment, the town of Kiskindha and others on the way. Again Valmiki beautifully compares the city of Ayodhya to an aerial car.

Finally, he goes on to why the knowledge and science of these flying machines was a dying art in ancient times, but was real nonetheless, with winged planes and tubular airships that were built in numbers (100 or 200? More?) and were used by royalty and military commanders in ancient times. Says Dr. Dikshitar:

This is an allusion to the use of flying machines as transport apart from their use in actual warfare. Again in the *Vikramaurvasiya*, we are told that king Pururavas rode in an aerial car to rescue Urvasi in pursuit of the Danava who was carrying her away. Similarly in the *Uttararamacarita* in the fight between Lava and Candraketu (Act VI) a number of aerial cars are mentioned as bearing celestial spectators. There is a statement in the *Harsacarita* of Yavanas being acquainted with aerial machines. The Tamil work *Jivakacintamani* refers to Jivaka flying through the air.

But it has to be inferred that being very costly, their use was more or less the exclusive privilege of kings and aristocrats. Another reason why they did not become common is found in the following lines from the *Samaranganasutradhara:*

[Sanskrit text—not directly translated]

This supplies a certain clue to the right understanding of the decline of this art. The make and construction of these contrivances were usually

kept secret lest others should get a knowledge of them and use them for wrong ends.

... To conclude, the flying vimana of Rama or Ravana was set down as but a dream of the mythographer till aeroplanes and zeppelins of the present century saw the light of day. The *mohanastra* or the "arrow of unconsciousness" of old was until very recently a creature of legend till we heard the other day of bombs discharging poisonous gases. We owe much to the energetic scientists and researchers who plod persistently and carry their torches deep down into the caves and excavations of old and dig out valid testimonials pointing to the misty antiquity of the wonderful creations of humanity.

So, at the end of his chapter he essentially quotes an ancient text and tells us that it indicates that certain sciences are kept a secret and royal families or secret societies limited the disseminating of this knowledge; therefore, rather than flourishing, the science of aeronautics—in ancient times—basically died out. One can see how these aircraft can do more harm than good—that is what the ancient Indian epics describe—and why certain councils of wisemen have wanted to keep them a secret. Some researchers, as we will see in later chapters, believe that secret brotherhoods, societies, etc. have kept this knowledge alive to this day. Some maintain that some of these craft, like ancient jalopies, still exist today.

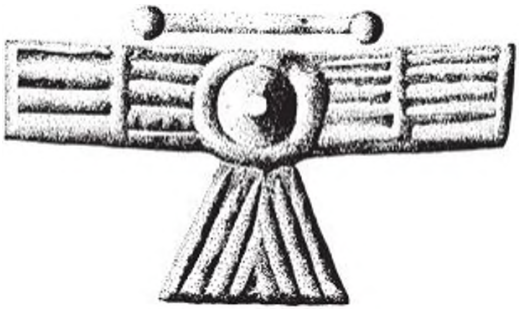
The Movable Palaces of the *Vimana-vatthu*

Before we look at the *Ramayana* in a separate chapter, let us look at the curious Buddhist book (actually a booklet) known as the *Vimana-vatthu*.

The *Vimana-vatthu* (complete title *Vimana-vatthu of the Khuddhaka nikaya Sutta pitaka)* is a Buddhist book that "describes the splendor of the various celestial abodes belonging to the Dewas, who became their fortunate

owners in accordance with the degree of merit they had each performed, and who there spent their time in supreme bliss," as the introduction tells us.

Generally known as *Vimana-vatthu*, the book was translated and published in 1886 by the Pali Text Society in Oxford. Pali is the sacred language of the Theravada Buddhist canon. It is said that Lord Buddha was opposed to the use of Sanskrit as a vehicle for his teachings and encouraged his followers to use Pali, a dialect of northeast India. It came from India to Sri Lanka (then called Ceylon) in the third century. It eventually died out and was replaced in Ceylon with Sinhalese. The title page says that the book was edited and parts of it translated into English by a British-Ceylonese scholar named Edmund Rowland Gooneratne, who was a member of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch).



This unusual book, copies of which were difficult to obtain (though now available from the University of Toronto Library via the Internet), was dedicated to Arthur Charles Hamilton-Gordon who was the governor of Ceylon from 1883 to1890.

An important figure in British colonial administration, Arthur Charles Hamilton-Gordon was the youngest son of the British aristocrat George

Hamilton-Gordon, the 4th Earl of Aberdeen. He was born on November 26, 1829 and became a British Liberal Party politician and colonial administrator. After graduating from Trinity College, Cambridge in 1851, he worked as Assistant Private Secretary to his father, who was then the British Prime Minister. He became a Member of Parliament and then the governor of a number of British colonial territories. He was the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, 1861–1866; Governor of Trinidad, 1866–1870; Governor of Mauritius, 1871–1874; Governor of Fiji, 1875–1880; Governor of New Zealand, 1880–1882; and Governor of Ceylon, 1883–1890. He became the 1st Baron Stanmore, of Great Stanmore, Middlesex in 1893. A fascinating and well-traveled man, he passed on in 1912.

The statesman was a very important personage of his time and it would seem that he was aware of this curious Buddhist book; the topic of vimanas must have been something that he would have been familiar with. The book is essentially a question-and-answer text featuring the Buddha himself and his enlightened followers. It's essentially about these spiritual "Masters" who, because of their good works, are known in this book as Dewas. They reside in movable palaces that can be repositioned from place to place so that the Dewas can perform more good works. The whole book is fascinating and quite amazing, yet it shows us how common the concept of vimanas was in ancient times, and concurs with the whole notion that vimanas are machines, moving palaces that go from one location to another. During this journey, the Dewa relaxes in his seat, probably with his Dewa friends, drinks the nectar of the gods, like some sort of *soma* (a mysterious divine drink of immortality) and generally has a good time. Eventually, he gets to his destination in the vimana and does other things, such as interacting with other humans and doing more good works.

We can visualize those Bodhisattvas sitting in their clouds, a few of their possessions around them, including prayer flags, looking down at the earth,

ready to move their clouds (vimanas) from place to place, whereever good deeds were needed. The best way to describe the *Vimana-vatthu* is to let you read the brief introduction written by Edmund Rowland Gooneratne:

> The *Vimana-vatthu* is a work that describes the splendor of the various celestial abodes belonging to the Dewas, who became their fortunate owners in accordance with the degree of merit they had each performed, and who there spent their time in supreme bliss.
>
> These Vimanas are graphically described in this little work as column-supported palaces that could be moved at the will of their owner. A Dewa could visit the earth in these, and we read of their so descending on occasions when they were summoned by the Buddha.
>
> The lives of the Dewas in these vimanas or palaces were limited, and depended on the merits resulting from their good acts. From all that we read of them we can well infer that these habitations were the centers of supreme felicity. It is doubtless with much forethought that peculiar stress is laid, in our work, on the description of these vimanas, in order to induce listeners to lead good and unblemished lives, to be pure in their acts, and to be zealous in the performance of their religious duties. Stories from the *Vimana-vatthu* are not unfrequently referred to in later doctrinal works, when a virtuous career in life is illustrated. Thus Mattakundali and Sirima Vimana are referred to in the *Dhammapada Atthakatha; Citta, Guttila,* and *Rewati* are quoted in the *Sutta Sangaha.*
>
> This treatise is the sixth book in the *Khuddaka Nikaya of the Sutta Pitaka,* and I cannot furnish my readers with a better description of it than that given in the *Paramattha Dipani,* the commentary on this and three other books.

The translator Gunartna then goes on to give an English translation of the

original Pali introduction to the *Vimana-vatthu* thought to have been composed in 412 AD:

TRANSLATION.

I ADORE the compassionate Buddha, who has crossed the ocean of knowledge, and is skilled in the abstruse and profound Dharma, with its varied significations.

I adore the Word, instrumental in liberating from worldly pleasures (beings) endowed with knowledge and conduct, and venerated by the Supreme Buddha.

I adore the righteous Priesthood, full of piety and other virtues, who exercise the paths and the fruitions, who are unrivalled (in virtue) and are fields of merit.

Having freed myself from all impediments through the influence of merit resulting from my obeisance in the above manner to the three *Gems*, I compose as well as I can, and in conformity with the opinions of the priesthood of the Maha Wihara, who are absolutely pure, and are sanguine and subtle in their decisions, a commentary on a work recited in ancient times by the great sages as the *Vimana-vatthu* of the Khuddaka-nikaya, abiding by the sense of the old commentary (that existed), though entering into details in certain places. The *Vimana-vatthu* is a catechetical treatise of the merits of Dewas, who were blessed with abodes in accordance with the good acts that they performed in previous births.

Vimanas are the abodes of pleasure of the gods, and are so called as they have sprung up in accordance with the merits resulting from the amount of good deeds performed by them. They are of one and two yojanas in extent, are brilliant with gems, and being of variegated colors and forms are really worth seeing.

They are called vimanas as their size is particularized.

Being a narrative of the vimanas the book is called *Vimana-vatthu*, and it commences with *pithan te sovanna-mayam*, etc.

This is a brief explanation of its contents. As the beauty, wealth, and retinue of the gods, and the good deeds of which they are the results, form the subject of this narrative, and it points out the effects of causes, and describes the vimanas that have sprung up in accordance with meritorious acts performed, it is called *Vimana-vatthu*.

By whom was the *Vimana-vatthu* propounded, where, when, and for what purpose? This *Vimana-vatthu* consists of queries and replies. The replies were given by some of the dewas, some of the queries were put by the Lord Buddha, some by Sekra and others, and some by the Sravaka-Theras.

The major part, however, of it was delivered by Maha Moggallana, who, for a period of one asankeyya and one hundred thousand kappas in order to become one of the principal disciples of Buddha; and in due course having practiced the perfections of a disciple, and acquiring the six supernatural faculties, and the four attainments peculiar to the highest order of the Arahats, and having attained to the acme of knowledge necessary for a chief Sravaka was selected as the second chief disciple of Buddha, who pronounced him as pre-eminent amongst those having supernatural powers.

The expounder (Moggallana) having first traversed the celestial abodes, and having inquired from the gods (to what particular merits they owe their births), descended to the world of men, and clearly described to them for their benefit by a series of questions and answers, the results of performing good deeds, submitted it to Buddha, and recited it to the priests.

The questions of Sekra and the replies of the gods given to him, have also been recited by Maha Moggallana.

The questions of Buddha, the Theras and the Dewas and the replies given to them by the Dewas on various occasions, were collected by the Great Theras at the Recension of the Dhamna and Yinaya, and was recited as the *Vimana-vatthu*.

To the first query here "by whom was this recited?"; the answer "by Moggallana" is brief and general, as for a full account of him, his history from the time that he made his first resolve (to aspire to the second discipleship) at the feet of the Buddha Anomadassi should be given. This history will be found in different places in the Commentaries of the religion, and may be gathered as narrated in them.

To the query "where the stories were narrated, etc?" the full answer is that they will be found in the description given of each celestial abode. Others say, one day Moggallana who had privately retired for the purpose of meditation thought thus: At the present day, though beings offer ill-gotten wealth to irreligious priests, they have been born in the celestial worlds purely out of faith in the deeds they have performed and enjoy untold felicity. I shall proceed to the celestial abodes, and get the gods to repeat the good works they have performed, and the merits they enjoy as their results, and will inform the fact to Buddha who will found thereon an excellent discourse, by which, as clearly as the full moon in the firmament, he will take each of the celestial abodes as examples, and will illustrate to beings the fruit of their actions, and the great benefits that would accrue by the performance of even trivial righteous acts with faith in their eventual good results. He thought that that discourse will be advantageous and beneficial to many, and will be conducive of happiness to gods and men.

Rising from his seat, and putting on a red-colored double garment, and covering himself with a red-colored double robe, leaving one shoulder bare, like the flash of a torrent of real vermillion, and like a moving blue

mountain, where all that is good is concentrated, he approached Buddha, and bowing before him respectfully, stood on a side, and declared to him his intention, and obtaining his permission, arose from his seat and circumambulating him, attained the four stages of mystic meditation based on the six transcendent faculties, and in a moment by supernatural power proceeded to the *Tawtisa* heavens, and inquired from the various celestial beings the merits that they had gained by their good works. They related them to him. From thence returning to the world of men, he informed all the particulars as he gathered them to Buddha, and he was glad.

Buddha based this information in an exhaustive discourse to his listeners.

Of the Yinaya, Sutta, and Abhidamma pitakas, this Vimana-vatthu belongs to the Sutta Pitaka, and of the Five Nikayas, the Digha, Majjhima, Sanyutta, Anguttara and Khuddhaka, it belongs to the Khuddaka Nikaya.

So, from the curious text of the *Vimana-vatthu* we are essentially told that vimanas are abodes belonging to the Dewas, who live inside and pilot these "flying houses" in accordance with the degree of merit they had each performed, and each of these enlightened beings is a doer of many good works. The vimanas are graphically described as column-supported palaces that could be moved at the will of their owner. A Dewa could visit the earth in these, and did so when they were summoned by the Buddha. This is commonly depicted in Buddhist iconography as Bodhisatvas sitting in small pagodas on clouds or in small saucer-shaped pagodas as at the sacred temple of Borabodur in Indonesia. The occupants of these vehicles are humans but they are now demi-gods who are doers of good works. They would seem to be scientists, engineers and philosophers who know the secrets of flying through the universe.

At this point we have established that the term vimana is a common one

in Hindu and Buddhist texts and it described a flying vehicle of some sort—one that was real and not imaginary. A vimana was a machine that could be used for travel and pleasure but it could also be used for destruction. Therefore we might infer that not everyone who is enlightened and peaceful could get their hands on a vimana.

An Indian poster portraying the Pandava dynasty from the *Mahabharata*.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BIZARRE TALE OF THE RAMAYANA

Rama ruled the earth for eleven thousand years. He gave a year-long festival in this very Naimisha Forest. All of this land was in his kingdom then; one age of the world ago; long, long ago; long before now, and far in the past. Rama was King from the center of the world to the four Oceans' shores.

— *The Ramayana* by Valmiki

As noted in chapter one, the story of the *Ramayana* is one that covers everything from lost cities, ancient flight, super-charged weapons and the struggle between good and evil. S, supernatural demons, wookie-like apemen and other sidekicks fight it out in the battles that could inspire the most amazing graphic novel. Oh, and throw some buxom babes into the mix.

A mentioned previously, the *Ramayana* is an older story than the *Mahabharata* and an abbreviated version of part of the *Ramayana* appears in the *Mahabharata,* with its story-within-a-story narrative. A version was modernized circa 1530 AD by Goswami Tulsidas, which gives us a slightly different book, generally known as the *Tulsidas Ramayana,* rather than the standard Valmiki version. Tulsidas is generally considered to be an incarnation of Valmiki, as is typical to the Hindu mind when encountering incidents and personalities that are recurring.

The *Ramayana* tells the story of a lot of petty fights in the order of family succession, aristocratic rivalries over who gets which girl, and ultimately if a woman who has either been kidnapped or run off with someone else can return to her husband and take up a normal life after entire wars have been launched and thousands of people killed. This story includes vimanas and the epic makes it very clear that vimanas are aerial vehicles; powerful

princes and kings would fly through the air in them and visit distant lands, just like today.

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It is hard to pin down exactly when the events of the *Ramayana* took place, or even when the great sage who recorded the events, Valmiki, lived. It appears that, like all master sages, he exists in all time, and so is sometimes a character participating in the story and at other times is the narrator of a tale that occurred long, long ago. Some scholars would say that the events of the *Ramayana* are entirely fictional and never happened at all; others would say that the story unfolded around 600 BC, but I maintain that that would be when the tale was recorded in Brahmi script. Since the events predate those of the *Mahabharata*, which as we have seen must have taken place before 3000 BC, the Ramayana reaches great antiquity. It may have happened as far back as 11,000 BC, during the Treta Yuga, thought to have ended circa 9500 BC.

It all begins at the city of Ayodhya, capital of kingdom of the same name, where a king named Dasharatha is married to three queens: Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra. Unfortunately, he is childless for a long time and in his effort to enhance his fertility he performs a special fire sacrifice known as Putra-Kameshti Yagya. As a consequence of this special ritual he suddenly begins to have children and the firstborn is Rama to his wife Kausalya. His other wife, Kaikeyi has the son Bharata, and his wife Sumitra has two sons, Lakshmana and Shatrughna.

Valmiki says that these princes are endowed, to one degree or another, with the essence of Vishnu, part of the Hindu Trinity (and the most typical god to be a reincarnation of). Vishnu has brought this family into incarnation in order to combat a demon named Ravana and his family. Ravana

and the Rakshas are somehow oppressing the gods—which seems hard to understand—but this demon and his empire can be only be destroyed by a mortal. And so the various princes of Ayodhya were brought up, though not knowing it, to confront this other power as avatars of Vishnu, princes who had wonderful cities, advanced technology and vimanas.

The young princes are reared with the best education, receiving instructions from unnamed ancient scriptures about princely conduct and warfare. When Rama is 16 years old, the sage Vishwamitra comes to the court of Dasharatha in search of help in fighting demons who are disturbing sacrificial rites.

He chooses Rama, who is followed by Lakshmana, his constant companion throughout the story. Rama and Lakshmana receive instructions and supernatural weapons from Vishwamitra, and proceed to destroy the demons.

Young Prince Rama and the Princess Sita

The story continues with another kingdom in northern India called Mithila. The kings of this country are all named Janaka, and one day Janaka (the 21st) finds a female baby in the furrow dug by his plough. Thrilled at the discovery he accepts this baby girl as his own daughter and names her Sita, meaning "furrow" in Sanskrit. It is not known what language was spoken at this ancient time of the *Ramayana,* possibly Dravidian or Indus Valley Civilization.

Sita grows up to be an extremely beautiful and charming lady and is seen as a very desirable wife. When it is determined that Sita should be married the king decides to have a contest between suitors to see who can bend the powerful bow that the king had been given by the god Shiva. Rama is the only one who can bend this bow and he is deemed the man who should marry Sita. It is also arranged that Rama's three brothers will marry three

other daughters of king Janaka. The mass wedding ceremony takes place among much celebration and then the four couples return to Ayodhya.

Twelve years go by and the elderly king Dasharatha desires that Rama become his successor. However, the queen Kaikeyi, who is the mother of Bharata, is able to ask a special boon that the king had granted her years ago and requests that he banish Rama in the forest for 12 years while her son, Bharata, rules the kingdom. After 12 years Rama can return and rule the kingdom as Darsharatha wishes. Although he is heartbroken, the king gives in to the queen and Rama voluntarily goes into exile in the forest. Sita and his brother Lakshmana go with him. Bharata, who had been away visiting his maternal uncle returns and is shocked to learn of these events. His father has now died and he does not like his mother's scheming at all, so he visits Rama and asks him to return as king. Rama, however, wants to follow his father's wishes to the letter and says he will remain in exile. Bharata takes the sandals of Rama to be placed on the throne while he rules Ayodhya as Rama's regent.

Back in the forest, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana make their way southward along the Godavari River, living off the land and eventually building some cottages. One day Rama and Lakshmana meet a woman named Surpanakha, who is the sister of soon-to-be archenemy Ravana. It is said that the members of this family are Rakshasas, or "demons worshippers" and the often the word Rakshasa is interchangeable with demon or demon-worshipper. Throughout the *Ramayana* the word Rashasa is used to describe the "bad guys" but as we shall see later, it is somewhat arbitrary, and it is hard to determine exactly why they are so bad. They are, however, shape-shifters.

Surpanakha is a rather lusty lady and gets the hots for Rama and tries to seduce him. He rejects her, and she tries to seduce Lakshama who also rejects her. Enraged by the rejection of the two men, she attempts to kill Sita but the brothers stop her. As punishment, they cut off her nose. One of

Surpanakha's brothers, a Rakshasa named Khara, organizes an attack on Rama and Lakshmana but is defeated. Her other brother, the king of the mysterious land of Lanka, Ravana, hears of all this and is angry that his sister has been by Rama and Lakshmana, and that they have killed his brother Khara. He decides that, for revenge, he will kidnap Sita and in this way punish Rama. However, he seems to already know her and is wanting her for himself. Later, he constantly asks her to be his queen.

Ravana flies to the forest in his vimana with a servant named Maricha with a plan to trick the two brothers away from Sita so Ravana can kidnap her. Maricha assumes the form of a golden deer which is seen by Sita and Rama. Sita is captivated by the beautiful creature and persuades Rama to capture it for her. He is suspicious that this is some sort of trickery, but decides to pursue the golden deer as Sita wishes. Rama leaves Sita in the care of Lakshmana and goes off into the forest to attempt the capture.

Some time goes by, and Sita thinks she hears Rama calling to her from the forest to come and help him. She convinces a suspicious Lakshmana to go look for Rama. Lakshmana tells her to stay in the cottage and not let anyone enter. He then draws a chalk outline around the cottage and casts a magical spell that prevents anyone from crossing the line to the inside—however it does not stop anyone from crossing it from the inside to the outside. He warns her again not to entertain any strangers and goes to look for Rama.

Ravana now approaches the cottage disguised as a wandering holy man. He tricks Sita into stepping outside of the magical circle surrounding the cottage. He reveals himself to a shocked Sita and forces her into his vimana. They then begin the long flight to Lanka where Ravana is king.

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King Ravana and the Mysterious Land of Lanka

Ravana and Sita are pursued by the demi-god Jatayu, who normally takes the form of a giant vulture. Jatayu is said to be the son of Arjuna and a nephew of Garuda. He was also a good friend of Rama's father, Dasharatha. When young, Jatayu would compete with his brother Sampati to see who could fly the highest. One time, Jatayu was flying so high that he was about to get seared by flames from the sun. Sampati saved Jatayu by spreading his own wings as a shield. Unfortunately, Sampati was injured and lost his wings and lived wingless for the rest of his life.

Jatayu catches up with Ravana and Sita in the vimana and attacks them. Ravana and Jatayu engage in some sort of aerial warfare and Ravana wins by cutting off one of Jatayu's wings. Jatayu falls mortally wounded to the ground and Ravana continues on his way through the sky in his aircraft. Since these demon-worshiping Rakshasas tend to travel in groups, and we are told that Maricha was with Ravana, we might assume that there were a number of people in this vimana on its way to Lanka, not just Ravana and Sita as typically depicted in paintings and other renderings of the scene.

An illustration of the marriage of Rama and Sita.

Rama and Lakshmana, meanwhile, have jumped into their vimana and are in hot pursuit. They arrive at the spot on the ground where Jatayu has fallen from the sky. He tells them of his aerial dogfight with Ravana and how he lost the battle. He also tells them which way they were going in Ravana's vimana—and that was south. Today there are several places in India purported to be this spot where Jatayu fell to the earth, and one of them is in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Ravana and Sita fly over an ocean in the vimana and then arrive in Lanka where they land at a vimana park near Ravana's palace in the capital city of Lankapura. Sita is kept under guard in Ravana's palace by the demon-worshiping Rakshasas, although it seems she can't really escape to some other place anyway, and is probably enjoying a pretty lavish lifestyle at Lanka. Ravana tells Sita that she should marry him and be his queen, but—according to the story— she refuses to marry him and tells him that she is eternally devoted to Rama, as any good wife should do.

Lankapuri was said to be an idyllic city of incredible wealth. Hunger was unknown there and even the poorest households ate and drank from vessels of gold. The land of Lanka was an island country, surrounded by other island countries, somewhere in the Indian Ocean. It has variously been situated to the west of India, or directly south, or even to the southeast—and some think as far away as Europe or Atlantis. A number of Indian scholars seem to think that Lanka was in a now submerged area to the south or west of India, such as near the Maldives or south of Sri Lanka going towards Australia. Many Tamil scholars are convinced that the Tamil race is from some sunken continent in the southern Indian Ocean, south of Sri Lanka. Parts of Australia might have made up this land and Ramachandra Dikshitar believed that there was an affinity between Australian aboriginals and the Tamils.

According to the *Ramayana* (and its second version in the *Mahabharata)* Lanka was situated away from mainland India by a distance of "100 Yojanas," which is generally calculated by scholars at about eight miles per yojana, and therefore 800 miles (or around 1288 kilometres) away. One hundred is a nice round number, but 800 miles away from mainland India going south would put Ravana's Lanka far past the best known island off India, the island called Ceylon. Even though the island of Ceylon changed its name to Sri Lanka in 1972, it may not be the Lanka of the *Ramayana,* and many scholars on the book think it was indeed somewhere else. The Maldives is the flattest country in the world, and indeed, these plateaus of a submerged mountain range can barely keep there heads above the water, rising a scant five feet.

What these scholars think is that Lanka is pretty far away from the coast of southern India and the island of Ceylon is just too close. Also, Ceylon is just off the southeastern coast of India and Valmiki's *Ramayana* seems to indicate that Lanka is off the western coast of India. Indeed, Valmiki syas

that Lanka was in the midst of a series of large island nations, and that around these island nations were submerged mountains like sunken plateaus in the western part of the Indian Ocean. Areas of the Maldives and Lacadives today have this sunken mountaintop look to them.

Some scholars put Lanka on a sunken land around the Maldive Islands, but even this area is too close to India to fit the descriptions. The Lanka of the *Ramayana* may have been farther than this, in the Seychelles or even beyond. Suffice it to say that it was very far away, not just from Ayodhya where it all started, but from India itself.

This island nation of Lanka was a large place and had huge port cities. Its greatest city was the capital Lankapuri which was a huge collection of buildings, plazas and baths that was said to have the fantastic dimensions of 100 Yojanas (approximately 800 miles or 1,288 kilometers) in length and 30 Yojanas (approximately 240 miles or 386 kilometers) in breadth. One would imagine this probably as a huge canal city—but one with vimana lanes and landing pads. The *Ramayana* describes Lanka as having a large mountain in its interior that was called Trikuta Mountain. The city of Lankapuri went up to the base of this mountain and around it, so it was visible to all the citizens. Atop the very peak, surrounded by the rest of the city, was the central palace complex which reached high into the sky with skyscrapers and was about 20 miles in area. Such was the incredible land of Lanka and its capital city of Lankapuri. However, Ravana did not build any of this.

The large island nation of Lanka was said to have been originally created by the celestial architect Vishwakarma for Shiva, one of the gods of the Hindu. Later this masterly made place of canals and fabulous buildings was ruled by a king named Sumali, and his kingdom and palace were guarded by the Rakshasas, who are essentially cast as the bad guys in the *Ramayana*. There is a dichotomy here, as the land of Lanka is really one of great wealth and apparently happy people who are well served by the kings. The

Ramayana paradoxically describes Lanka as an idyllic country of wealthy and happy citizens but its rulers, as time goes on, have motives that are wrong and ultimately bring on bad karma. However, a number of these Rakshasas are really quite decent people such as Ravana's brother Vibhishana, whom we will meet in a little bit. In every classic fight, there needs to be good guys and bad, and it appears that in the *Ramayana* the Rakshasas are somewhat simplistically characterized as the baddies.

After king Sumali, Lanka is ruled by a king named Visarvana who is a reincarnated avatar of the Hindu god of wealth named Kubera. Visarvana is a Yaksha and builds the fantastic citadel of Lankapuri that is apparently the shining glory of the world, like some sort of glittering Manhattan, Dubai or Hong Kong of today's world.

Visarvana as the demi-god Kubera is a lord of abundance and all things pertaining to success, money and all the things that can be bought with wealth, including chariots, boats and vimanas. Kubera in Hindu myth is a protector of the world and a keeper of the treasures of the world, if not their outright owner. He is a god of good luck and is often depicted as a happy man wearing jewelry, with a large belly and a money-pot or money-bag in one hand and a club in the other. Sometimes he is depicted as a dwarf, or with other deformities like broken teeth. He is reputed to have defeated the Naga serpents that guard treasure and is thus himself incredibly rich. Lankapuri was sometimes called Kubera's City.

As the builder of Lankapuri, Visarvana/Kubera was apparently the richest man in the world, as the *Ramayana* hints. Since the building of such a city, if it ever existed, would have taken a considerable amount of time, we should probably consider this a family dynasty of the Visarvanas. These peoples, including the ordinary citizens, were incredibly well off. They also employed a well-trained army that guarded the city, had weapons, flew vimanas, and were ready to fight.

According to the *Ramayana* Visarvana was the half-brother of Ravana and together they fought in battle. Visarvana grants a boon to Ravana who makes the outrageous request of having the kingdom of Lanka and the fantastic citadel of Lankapuri bestowed upon hi. Ravana has a powerful army and threatens to take Lanka by force if necessary. Their mutual father, Vishavra, advises Visarvana to give up his kingdom to Ravana, who has such a powerful army and vimana airforce that he is now undefeatable.

Visarvana allows Ravana to be king of Lanka and he retires to a mysterious city called Alaka which is located somewhere in the Himalayas. Since the description of Lankapuri is so incredible, one can only imagine that Alaka, is some sort of super-fortress inside a mountain containing many of the treasures of mankind, of which Kubera (as Visarvana) is the keeper according to Hindu tradition.

Even though Ravana has somewhat usurped the kingdom of Lanka, the *Ramayana* says that he is regarded as an effective and benevolent ruler and the island nation continues to flourish. Under Ravana's rule it is still the richest country in the world, even richer, and Lankapuri is a magnificent and happy city. So who is this Ravana and is he really such a bad guy? Many Hindu scholars claim that he is not a bad guy at all, but quite the opposite. As with anyone's life, things are complicated.

Ravana the Vimana Master

Ravana is now the reler of a magnificent kingdom full of wealth and power, and he has the power to fly through the air in his vimana, just as we fly across the earth in airplanes today. The *Ramayana* tells us that he was born one of the sons of the great sage Vishrava. His grandfather was Pulastya, who is deified as one of the ten Prajapatis, who are the mind-born sons of Brahma. Pulastya was also one of the Seven Great Rishis or Sages, collectively known as the *Saptarishi*. The *Saptarishi* is probably the template

for certain wise groups of men, such as the Council of Seven from Theosophy. Reportedly, they meet together as a group occasionally and make important decisions concerning spriritual matters on Earth.

So, Ravana has some pretty lofty credentials as far as ancestry goes. Ravana has a number of brothers and sisters including the brothers Vibhishana, Kumbhakarna and Ahiravana and a sister named Meenakshi. His brothers are all depicted as fairly nice guys, even though they are Rakshasas, and one of them becomes a very good friend of Rama, as we will see later. Ravana's wife is Kaikesi, who is the daughter a Daitya king named Sumali. Daityas are a race of giants, descended from the Asuras, ancient deities that were said to be in constant competition with the Devas. The Asuras and Daityas were of gigantic stature, but over time, as their descendants intermarried, they apparently became more of a normal size, though everyone was taller back then, according to the *Ramayana*.

The Daityas and Asuras became demonized in the ancient epics, and it is from the Asuras that people known as the Rakshasas sprang. Many Hindu scholars have noted that the characterization of these otherwise "normal" and prosperous people of Lanka as "demon-worshippers" is due to the fact that this group did not make what was termed proper sacrifices to the "gods," and Rakshasas were known as disrupting certain religious ceremonies. Essentially, some sort of "change of rituals" was going on, and those on the losing side of the amazing story told in the *Ramayana* have becomes demons because they did not follow some old—or new—custom or ritual as prescribed. The term Rakshasa and Asura are often interchangeable—by meaning "those who don't follow our correct ritual."

Ravana was said to be a superb scholar, author and musician. Under special tutelage from wise sages Ravana mastered the teachings in the Vedas and other holy books, and learned the art of being a great warrior. He loved music and ultimately became an exceptional musician and a master of the

musical instrument known as the veena.

The veena is a stringed instrument similar to the sitar, and is a major instrument in Indian classical music. Created thousands of years ago—by the gods—it has a distinctive timbre and resonance from sympathetic strings, with a long hollow neck and bridge design, plus a gourd resonating chamber. It is said that the earliest veena was a type of instrument that survives in the Burmese harp, perhaps showing us that it is originally from Southeast Asia. The sitar is derived from the veena, modified by a Mughal court musician to conform to his tastes, and named the sitar after the Persian instrument that was called a *setar* (meaning "three strings"). It went through further changes to be the modern instrument that it is today.

Ravana was said to be a good student, but was arrogant and aggressive, maybe like some of the students at Harry Potter's Hogwart's School of Magic. He is the author of the important ancient treatise known as the *Ravana Sanhita—a* powerful book on Hindu astrology. Ravana was said to possess a thorough knowledge of Ayurveda and political science. An Ayurvedic book known as the *Kumara tantram of Ravana* is attributed to him.

Ravana is often depicted as having 10 heads. This arises from an interpretation of the *Ramayana* saying that he was a ten-headed person because he had a very thorough knowledge of the 10 important books: the four Vedas and six Upanishads; this was a phrase often used that meant he was as powerful as 10 scholars. As a real person, flying around in his vimana, he was not a man of 10 heads, but a refined and important king. He flirted with only the highest royalty and he wanted Sita to be his queen.

He would seem to be the ultimate jet-setting king of his day, with his kingdom among many islands, ready to fly off in his vimana with his friends, party with the princes and princesses in foreign lands and then go home to their fantastic city of Lankapuri. Other nations around them must

have had their own cities, ports and vimana landing areas, though nothing was as opulent and impressive as the city of Lankapuri.

So, the more we look at Ravana, Sita and Lankapuri, the more we get the idea that Ravana isn't some 10-headed monster at all, but a pretty cool guy—albeit somewhat arrogant and headed for a fall. He is basically trying to impress Sita with a pretty nice life that she could live if she stayed in Lanka with him.

Ravana had fought in many wars and ultimately became the king of Lanka as his prize. He was a great warrior and exceptional king, according to the *Ramayana*, but the impossibly lovely Sita would not give in to his charms—or did she?

§§§

The Saga of Sita and Hanuman

The *Ramayana* tells us that Sita was just too virtuous to fall for the charms of Ravana, rich, powerful and accomplished guy though he might be. No, she needed lover-boy, Rama, to come and rescue her and take her back to their cottage and kingdom. She told Ravana, officially, that she was a very devoted wife and just couldn't take up this opulent life with him in his wonderful palace. In a sense, she was a country girl at heart, and she loved Rama, who everyone knew was a great guy, but who lived in a crummy cottage in the forest.

The side-stories of the *Ramayana*, are obsessed with themes like women's virtue, how devoted a husband or wife should be, and familial fealty. The recurring theme of duty to one's family often includes acceding to completely unreasonable family wishes and orders—and then carrying them out as some sort of karmic penance to others for the poor choices that they are making—but that is your family duty! This occurs early in the *Ramayana*

when Rama is forced into the forest for 12 years because of poor decisions and screwed up family matters. Still, the *Ramayana* endorses this dutiful behavior, despite all the problems that it causes.

So, we have Sita, a princess from a small kingdom in northern India—usually thought to be the area encompassing the large border area of India and western Nepal and the city of Janakpur—who marries a guy that she thinks is going to be king, but instead gets banished to the forest for 12 years. They live in relative poverty and then Ravana, mister glitter and flash shows up with a free vimana ride to his amazing city of Lankapuri, sort of like a trip to Las Vegas or Bangkok. She takes a ride and has a good time. According to the *Ramayana* she is on a rollercoaster of being royalty, then living in poverty and now back in the money again. When she lived with Rama in the cottage, it was not exactly a world of luxury.

While Sita is "captive" at the palace of Lankapuri, Rama and his brother Lakshmana are searching for her, not knowing where she has been taken. During this search they enter the kingdom of the monkeys or monkey-men, a place called Kiskindha. The two brothers come to a mountain where the king of the monkey-men lives, a talking apeman named Sugriva.

Sugriva asks the brothers who they are, and Rama tells him that he is an exiled prince from Ayodhya looking for his missing wife. He asks Sugriva if he would be able to help them? Sugriva tells Rama that he will help them if they will help him regain his throne, which was taken from him by his older brother, Vali. He also tells Rama and Lakshmana that some of his people had seen Ravana and Sita flying overhead in Ravana's vimana, and that Sita had dropped some jewelry from the sky. He then produces a gold ornament that Rama recognizes as belonging to Sita. Rama and Lakshmana then agree to fight and get the monkey king's kingdom back for him.

They do this in short order, killing Vali, but it is now the beginning of the rainy season. The brothers return to their cottage near Ayodhya to wait for

the finish of the rainy season and to allow Sugriva time to find Sita for them. However, at the end of the rainy season the brothers return to Kiskinda to find that Sugriva has not honored his promise, and has basically been partying with his friends all this time. Lakshmana is enraged by this and threatens to destroy the monkey citadel with one of the super-arrows (a missile) from his vimana. One of Sugriva's wives intervenes and gives an eloquent speech that convinces Sugriva to honor his pledge to find the location of Sita.

Sugriva sends four search parties north, south, east and west to search for the wayward woman. One of the search parties is commanded by Hanuman and another monkey-man named Angad. This group has gone to the south, where they meet a giant bird who was the brother of Jatayu, the giant vulture slain by Ravana when escaping in his vimana. They are told that they must cross a great ocean to reach Lanka and the palace of Ravana. There, in the garden of this fabulous palace, is Sita. Hanuman volunteers to cross the water and rescue Sita.

Hanuman and his monkey-man army make their way to the coast, but as they march into the water they realize that they will be unable to swim across this ocean, nor do they possess any vimanas with which to fly to the island nation. Hanuman kneels down and prays to Rama, whom he greatly admires, and miraculously he grows to great size. In this magical state Hanuman is able to make a giant leap over the ocean to the island nation of Lanka. Once in Lanka, he returns to his normal size and goes to look for Sita.

Hanuman locates Sita in the garden and watches her secretly for some time. When she is alone, he approaches her and identifies himself as Rama's friend and gives her Rama's ring as a symbol of his good faith. He offers to rescue her then and there and take her back to Ayodhya and her husband. But, in a bit of a twist in the story that shows us that she may not

have been so unwillingly abducted, she refuses to be rescued by Hanuman and insists that Rama come and rescue her himself. Various interpretations of the *Ramayana* will sometimes point out at this juncture that she did not want any man other than Rama to touch her, including the monkey-man Hanuman. She gives Hanuman a jewel from her decorations to give to Rama.

Hanuman, unable to rescue Sita because she won't let him, goes on a rampage about the city of Lankapuri, killing warriors and destroying trees and buildings. He allows himself to be captured and brought before an angry Ravana. Hanuman confronts Ravana and gives him a stern lecture, telling him to let Sita go. Ravana refuses to release Sita from the palace and Hanuman is condemned to death.

However, one of Ravana's councilors tells the king that it is forbidden to kill a messenger. Ravana thinks for a moment and then commands that Hanuman's tail be set on fire, and then he be released to return home in that manner. Hanuman's tail is set on fire, but he escapes from his bonds with his tail burning. He leaps from roof to roof on the way from the palace into the city. He succeeds in setting the whole city on fire and escapes the island by growing very large again and making the great leap across the ocean. He meets with his monkey-man army and they make a joyous return to the monkey-man citadel of Kishkindha with the news.

The Great War Between Rama and Ravana

The *Ramayana* tells us that Hanuman is received with glad tidings at Kishkinda, but he wants to hurry on to Rama's cottage to give him the news of Sita. He finds Rama in a state of deep depression by the river and gives him the news and the jewel from Sita.

Rama is overjoyed and says that he now has a reason to live. With renewed energy, Rama decides it is time to go and get his wife. He is going to

need a vimana, a bunch of weapons, and a good bunch of commando warriors like his brother Lakshmana to help him out. It is going to be one big-ass fight, and Rama is determined to defeat Ravana and get his woman back.

Meanwhile, back in the great palace in Lankapuri, Ravana is having problems with his brother Vibhishana. Vibhishana knows that since Rama now knew that Sita was at Lankapuri he would be coming to Lanka soon, and he was going to be very angry. Rama would no doubt bring his vimanas and a considerable arsenal of weapons—astras—including the super-weapons that the *Ramayana* is famous for.

Vibhishana asks Ravana to let Sita go and stop this silly fight with Rama. Ravana responds angrily that he cannot let her go, because if he did so the gods—and demons—would ridicule him. It is his pride that will not let her go, though perhaps he still thinks that she will marry him and be his queen if he defeats Rama.

Vibhishana fears the strength and power of Rama but Ravana says that he fears no one. Vibhishana then tells his brother that he cannot remain in Lanka and support him in his actions and decisions. Ravana tells Vibhishana to leave and that there is no place in his kingdom for the weak and timid of mind. Vibhishana departs from Lanka, having broken with his powerful brother because of all this trouble concerning Sita and Rama.

Vibhishana gets into his vimana and flies away from the island of Lanka over the ocean. Eventually he reaches the coastline of India and sees the camp of Rama, Lakshmana, Hanuman and their armies. He lands his vimana and greets them, telling the group that he is the brother of Ravana and has left Lanka after being unable to convince his brother of the terrible mistakes he was making. Vibhishana says that he wants to join Rama's army and fight with him.

Rama tells him that he has chosen good over evil, and that he may join

their forces. Together they are going to attack Lankapuri, and if Ravana is defeated then Rama will make Vibhishana the new king of Lanka. Vibhishana readily accepts this and gives Rama some good intel. He says that Ravana has a great army (all demon-worshipping scum, of course) and a son named Indrajit, who is a great general and has all sorts of amazing superweapons and the "magical powers" that come with them.

Rama and the Bridge to Lanka

Rama's Bridge, also called Adam's Bridge, is a narrow causeway that goes from southern India to the northern coast of Sri Lanka. Today, portions of this narrow causeway of land, which can be seen from space, are underwater, while other portions are above sea level.

Something similar to this Rama's Bridge is featured in the *Ramayana* in the tale of the monkey bridge to Lanka, although we have already determined that that Lanka was much further from India than Sri Lanka. With Rama and his army and his new ally Vibhishana standing on the shore of India, they realized that it was quite a distance to Lanka. While they had a number of vimanas to fly to Lanka with—each armed with a fantastic array of weapons— they could not bring the larger part of their force—the

monkey-man army of Hanuman—across the ocean with the vimanas.

Therefore, as the *Ramayana* tells us, Rama commands the ocean to roll back and a narrow causeway of land to rise above sea level for the monkey-man army to walk and jump across. This narrow causeway of land appears and the monkey-man army moves across it and enters the coast of Lanka. They then move inland and surround the city of Lankapuri. In the morning Ravana sees that his city is surrounded by Hanuman's army and is surprised. He orders two of his men to infiltrate Hanuman's army, presumably by magically looking like monkey-men themselves. They are recognized and captured, but Rama lets them go with a message to Ravana to release Sita.

An aerial photo of a section of Rama's Bridge as it exists today.

Back at the palace in Lankapuri things are not going well for Ravana and Rama has foiled his plans to learn about the army that has surrounded the city. In a bizarre plan to somehow flip Sita's headspace and get her to agree to be his queen, he has an exact duplicate of Rama's head made and shows it to her while telling her that Rama has lost the war and has been killed.

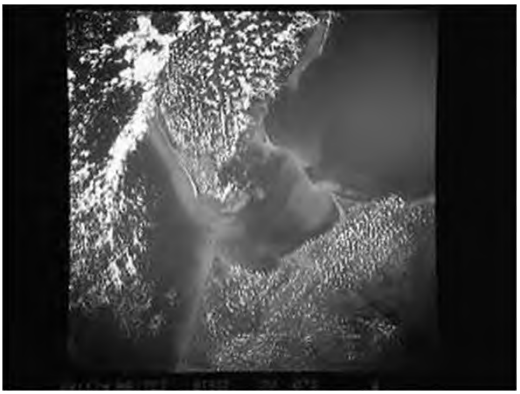
Sita is distraught and collapses saying that she wants to join Rama in death and will be ever faithful to him. Ravana storms out of the garden where Sita is kept and prepares himself for the big battle with Rama. He will need his army and his vimanas. He will need his personal vimana as well with its special super-weapons that he will use in his epic struggle with his foe. Perhaps privately he is cursing himself, and that damn Sita, who is a royal pain in the ass. Ravana orders an all-out assault on the army that had surrounded Lankapuri, and four great armies march at dawn out of the four great gates of the city. This battle would last for five days.

Out on the edge of the battlefields were Rama, Lakshmama, Vibhishana, Hanuman and other generals. Rama, Lakshmama, and Vibhishana each had control of a vimana and there were other commanders with their vimanas and weapons as well. Each took off in his vimana while the monkey-man army fought on the ground. Rama, Lakshmama and Vibhishana all fought with bravery and killed many enemies.

On the morning of the fifth day, among much death and destruction, Hanuman is injured in a duel but escapes back to the safety of his camp. Then Ravana's son Indrajit unleashes one of his special weapons, a volley of poisoned arrows that appear to be some sort of chemical attack. Rama and Lakshama are severely injured in this poison attack but continue to fight on. Indrajit hurls even more poisonous chemical weapons at them until Rama and Lakshama fall unconscious. The war rages on while they lie motionless on the battlefield.

Ravana and Indrajit then unleash a special weapon that kills in an invisible

way, with the victims unable to discern what is killing them. This sounds like another chemical attack, like ricin or nerve gas or even a neutron bomb. This invisible attack is explained in the *Ramayana* as Ravana casting a magical spell on his special-forces troops that renders them invisible. They then go into the heart of the monkey-man army and attack its forces as an unseen enemy. Perhaps it is an army of commandos in a cloak of invisibility, as the American military has claimed they are developing. This invisible army, whether made up of invisible soldiers or chemical weapons, devastated the monkey-man army of Hanuman and the forces of Rama, but all was not lost quite yetl



A satellite photo of Rama's Bridge as it exists today, part of it underwater.

Hanuman and the Flying Mountain

One of the more exciting and fantastic episodes of the *Ramayana* was now to occur. Hanuman fights off the invisible warriors of Lanka as best he can, and Vibhishana, Ravana's turncoat brother, is able to use his technology to make the invisible warriors visible, which allows the monkey-man army to fight more successfully against them. Meanwhile Ravana decides to start up his vimana and check all the weapons systems. He flies above

Lanka looking for Rama, who he hopes has now been killed on the battlefield. The *Ramayana* clearly states that Ravana views the battlefield while in the clouds in his vimana. He is in a sense using a puffy cloud in the sky as camouflage for his hovering vimana, while he watches events of the battlefield, looking for Rama.

At this time Rama and Lakshmana are coming around from the poison arrow/chemical attack on them. It seems that they will be okay, and just as they seem to be completely recovering, Ravana spots Lakshmana from his vimana and shoots him right in the chest with a special arrow fired from the aerial craft. Lakshmana collapses on the battlefield and Hanuman rushes to his side and carries him to safety.

Now Indrajit performs what will be his final attack on the assembled army of Hanuman, Rama and Vibhishana. Indrajit gets into a vimana and arms it with some special weapons. He then flies over the battlefield and uses a special power to make the vimana invisible. He successfully uses his superweapons in attacks on the remaining forces of Rama's collective army, so that by the end of the day, most of the men are dead or wounded and only Rama and his great generals remain, including Vibhishana, Hanuman and a general named Jambuvan.

Everyone, including Rama, seems to think that the battle was lost now. But then Jambuvan points out that the precious herb called Sanjivani can restore life to those who have just died. This special herb can be found at certain mountain (or range) called Dronagiri Parvat, which is in the Himalayas. Hanuman is sent to fetch this herb.

Hanuman flies through the air in the *Ramayana,* but he is really not said to have a vimana. This may be because he is a "monkey-man" or perhaps he just grows big and make big jumps. But at this point he pretty much starts flying through the air, which he couldn't do before, and I surmise that he is probably using a vimana at this point, but this is unclear in the *Ramayana*.

In the many paintings that have been made of the scene of Hanuman collecting the mountain of Dronagiri, he is usually shown flying through the air in the manner of Superman.

So, after a skirmish with someone that Ravana has sent to try to stop him, a commando-sorcerer named Kalanemi, Hanuman gets to the Himalayan massif known as Dronagiri, which includes the famous mountain Nanda Devi, and is located in Uttarakhand State north of New Delhi. This area is known as the Garhwal Himalaya, which was known, even in ancient times for its forests and mountain valleys that has been a favorite haunt of mystics, poets and philosophers four thousands of years. The peak Dunagiri is just over 7,000 meters high and other impressive peaks sit around it. The famous mystic city of Rishikesh is in this area, as well.

While at Dronagiri, Hanuman is confused and is unable to identify which herb it is, so he lifts the entire mountain that the *Ramayana* calls the mountain into the air. Hanuman then begins to carry this entire mountain with him southward to try and save Lakshmana. He is usually depicted in paintings as walking or flying through the air as a giant monkey-man with a snowcapped mountain in one upturned palm of his hand.

Hanuman is known as a limping god, and this is because, as he was carrying the mountain south, he passed through parts of the Ayodhya kingdom and approached the city of Ayodhya. Rama's brother Bharata was in Ayodhya acting as king until Rama returned, and saw the astonishing sight of Hanuman carrying an entire mountain with him. And worse, he was heading toward Bharata's (and Rama's) capital city of Ayodhya. Could he be on his way to Ayodhya to drop this mountain on their beloved city? Bharata was worried that this was the case, and he did not know who this giant monkey-man was. Was he friend or foe?

So, as Hanuman is crossing the Ayodhya River with the mountain balanced in his hand, Bharata takes an arrow, or shall we say a missile, from

his vimana, and fires it at Hanuman, wounding him in the leg. This was a special arrow because it had Rama's name written on it and therefore Hanuman did not stop it. Hanuman lands on the earth, presumably piloting a vimana, and explains to Bharata that he is a friend of Rama's and is trying to save Bharata's beloved brother by taking this mountain to him. Here we see old the how calling the accomplishment of a huge task as "moving a mountain" may have originated with the *Ramayana*. Maybe a similar mountain came to Muhammed.

Ravana visits Shiva at Mt. Kailash.

Hanuman bringing the mountain to Rama.

Bharata is extremely sorry for what has happened, and offers to shoot a special arrow into the sky at Lanka, which Hanuman could then ride upon in

order to reach Lanka across the ocean. Hanuman was wounded in the leg now, and his journey would be difficult, but his still declines, preferring to fly to Lanka on his own, without Bharata's help. He is still carrying a mountain with him, and he has been injured in the leg. He had also been previously injured during all of the vicious fighting at Lankapuri.

As Hanuman reaches Lanka flying through the air with the aromatic mountain of herbs, the herbs begin to spread their healing aromas amongst the dead or nearly dead warriors that lay on the battlefield. Inhaling the herbs revives the monkey-men warriors in large groups, and suddenly Rama has a large army coming to life again.

Hanuman arrives at the edge of the battlefield, dropping in from the sky, and saves Lakshmana with the special healing powers of the herbs that are now wafting everywhere. Hanuman, for some strange reason, returns the mountain to its place and the battle continues.

Did Hanuman have some sort of powerful vimana with lasers and a "tractor beam" that was able to cut out a large chunk of a mountain and move it through the air, being able to drop it on a city at any time, as Bharata feared? It seems incredible!

An illustration of Ravana flying in his vimana.

Victory to Rama!

Rama embraced Hanuman on his return to Lanka and said, "I know no one who shows your valor and devotion."

With that, Hanuman cried out, "Victory to Rama!"

Now the reassembled army of Rama, Lakshmana, Hanuman and Vibhishana (Ravana's own brother who is now a "good guy") prepares for the final assault on Lankapuri and Ravana's fortress, and only the most powerful vimanas and weapons will be useful. They destroy Indrajit with their accurate weapons and now prepare to strike into the central fortress of Lankapuri and overthrow Ravana as the leader of Lanka and its army/navy/airforce.

The *Ramayana* says that Ravana now armed himself with his most powerful weapons and took his most advanced vimana to do battle with Rama—a battle that was to last for two days.

Arming himself with his most powerful weapons, Ravana left Lanka palace. He spotted Rama leading the monkey army toward the city gates.

Ravana fired a magic arrow/missile at Rama. Seeing the arrow, Rama split

it with his own arrow. Ravana tried everything to overpower his foe. But each time, Rama had a counter-weapon. Says the *Ramayana* about this battle in which Rama uses the super-destructive atom-bomb-type weapon called the Brahmastra:

Ravana started the battle decked in armor, black as night, made of the strongest steel. He and Rama stood facing each other on the battlefield, Ravana in his mighty vimana and Rama in a vimana granted to him by Indra. They charged at each other, bows strung.

Ravana with his twenty arms was shooting eight bows at a time, while Rama shot his golden bow. Ravana shot thousands of arrows but none of them pierced Rama, and the whole time Rama was selecting his shots, shooting down Ravana's arrows and managing to sever Ravana's heads.

But as each head was cut off another would grow back in its place. When both saw that ordinary bows and arrows were not working they turned to the mighty astras and mantras. First Rama put a fire mantra on his arrows and sent them raining down on Ravana, like a volcano pouring from above.

Ravana saw this and used his own rain mantra, bringing rain clouds that poured down like a flood putting out the fire arrows. Rama then called upon a wind *astra,* in which the winds came and removed all the rain clouds from the sky. Ravana, in turn, fired an earth astra into the ground, bringing up mountains to block the winds from moving the clouds.

Rama then decided to use a weapon called Brahmastra. The mighty arrow/missile rose to the heavens with the help of all the elements. As it reached the apex it split apart into 180,000 bolts of lightning, stabbing the mountains created by Ravana, driving them back into the ground.

Here we have Ravana and Lanka being defeated by what sounds a lot like an atomic weapon or some sort of bunker-busting super conventional (non-atomic) bomb that creates a big explosion of "180,000 bolts of lightening" and incredibly drives mountains back into the ground. It seems fantastic, and yet we have such weapons, including bunker-busting bombs that can literally drive mountains into the ground. They were used during the Iraq War and may be used again in the future. We are not so surprised today that these weapons exist, but we are surprised that they are being described in ancient texts. In some ways the descriptions of these wars and weapons are so eerily similar to our own wars and weapons that it almost seems like some time-traveling tale of today being related to us from the past... does anyone remember the future? Or is it some sort of deja vu in a galaxy that was long, long ago but not so far away?

The End and a New Beginning

The *Ramayana* is now coming to a conclusion with this final battle. Ravana and his generals have now all been killed in this final atomic blast of Rama's super-weapon—a weapon given to him by the god Brahma.

The earth shook and a thousand suns burst forth and Ravana's Lanka was no more. Ravana was dead and Rama was victorious. The island nation itself was still there and Ravana's turncoat brother Vibhishana was to be the new king. The *Ramayana* even says that a soft wind blew over Lanka and there was a certain cleansing of the island nation. In many ways it sounds like what happened to the island nation of Japan at the end of WWII. There is an eerie similarity here, for sure.

All the violence, blood and gore is finally over, and a gigantic mess it is, all because of some king's desire for the super-hot Sita, who seems to encourage competition for her love and tortures all those who love her, including both Rama and Ravana, whether she means to or not. It seems hard to

believe, from what we know of the opulence of Lankapuri, that Sita wasn't enjoying herself in sin city during the time she was there, several years it would seem.

With the final blast of the Brahma-astra atomic bomb (or whatever) everything had changed and a new era was to begin says the *Ramayana*, an era of better behavior. This may not have lasted for very long, however.

The *Ramayana* auspiciously tells us that with his victory, the gods praised Rama. Once more the earth became steady. The sun shone brighter and the wind blew softly. Everyone stood silently in awe of the final battle and then Vibhishana knelt down over the dead body of Ravana and began to weep, asking why his brother had been so overcome with his crazy desire for Sita and his aggressive behavior to everyone, ultimately leading to his downfall? He is deeply emotional and compassionate for his fallen brother. He kneels at the body of his dead brother and asks, "Why didn't you listen to my words? Why were you so overcome with Sita and power?"

A painting of the multi-storied Pushpaka vimana described in the *Ramayana*.

Rama touches Vibhishana's shoulder and says, "Our ancients say that you should not mourn a mighty fallen warrior on the battlefield. Victory is the monopoly of none. Weep not for one who is no more. Rise, for we still have work to do."

Vibhishana prepars the funeral rites for his brother and declares, "My brother was so evil, people will try to keep me from giving him an honorable funeral."

Rama replies, "No one will stop this rite. Hostility ends with death. He is your brother and he is mine too. You must honor him with this rite."

Following the funeral rite, Rama make Vibhishana the new king of Lanka. Vibhishana's wife and maidens take Sita from the garden. A beautiful sari is placed around her. Jewels make her sparkle. A scarlet spot adorns her forehead. Sita cannot wait to see her victorious husband.

Rama enters the palace and Sita bows at his feet. He feels both love and sorrow for his wife. "We shall return to Ayodhya," he tells her. To prove her purity, Rama asks Sita to undergo an "agni pariksha" (a "test of fire") that involves her walking through a great fire—unharmed if she is pure. She does this, with the fire god Agni raising her up out of the fire and placing her on the throne with Rama. According to the *Ramayana*, with Rama and Sita now together on the throne of Ayodhya, the ideal state with good morals has been created, and this ideal state is called Ram Rajya.

But not everything is hunky-dory back in the kingdom of Ayodhya. Not everyone, it is revealed, in the kingdom thinks that Sita is as virtuous as she claims and she may have been the cause of all this violence and nonsense. This contrary talk about Sita is causing problems. People are saying, for instance, that she could have escaped from Lankapuri early on but insisted that Rama come and rescue her himself. This decision on Sita's part cost many thousands of lives, according to the *Ramayana*, and devastated an entire nation. Fortunately her purity was still intact, but now folks back in Rama's hometown were wondering about just how pure she was.

Rama's friends are wondering just what kind of woman Sita is, and why she had caused so many problems and deaths. Was some of this her fault?

Rama decides to have her banished from the royal quarters and tells is brothers to inform her. Naturally she bursts into tears. She is told that Rama will live alone from that night forth and she must go into exile. Lahkshmana and Rama's other brother Sumantra take Sita to the river in the forest where she will now have to live for a while. She is accepting her fate in a zen manner, and looks with wistful puzzlement at Rama's two brothers as the boat

they have piloted to drop her off on the riverbank now returns to the other side.

She looks out at the landscape and shimmering river, and all the many events that have transpired, including now a rejection from Rama, rush through her head. She suddenly hears the voice of the river goddess telling her to "let go" and dive into the river, that endless river of time.

In a dizzy, psychedelic haze she is ready to dive into the river and let her life end—to float downstream into the cosmic consciousness—but she is suddenly stopped by a nearby voice as she is about to step into the river.

She sees an old man with long hair—a rishi, a holy man from the Himalayas. The old man tells her not to enter the river. She asks him why?

As the amazing tale of the *Ramayana* comes full circle, he tells her he is a poet and a hermit named Valmiki, and he lives in a small cottage in the forest. He invites her to live in his cottage if she needs a place to stay. She accepts and it turns out that she is pregnant with Rama's twin children. For 12 years they grow up in the house of Valmiki, who is something of a time-traveling eternal sage, and in some ways, Rama himself. We are all the holograph of all we do, who we are, the many lives we live, and the avatars that all of us have and all of us are. We are the king called Rama, and we are Valmiki, and we are the anti-Rama, who is the defeated Ravana and all of his pride and arrogance.

Valmiki, while in the cottage with Sita, composes the *Ramayana* as a song/epic poem that was to be sung with the accompaniment of a flute and drum. He teaches his epic poem to Sita's children, Lava and Kusa, who are Rama's sons, and then sends them to a special festival that the now aging king Rama has organized at Ayodhya.

On the very first day of the festival, the two boys begin singing the song, one playing the flute and the other the drum. Rama is captivated by the poem/song and asks what the beautiful song is called.

"It is called the *Ramayana,*" he is told by the two boys.

Rama realizes that these are his sons, and breaks down into tears. He sends a message to Sita to return to him. She returns to him the next day and they stand before each other as she tells him that she wants to prove her purity. Rama tells her to go ahead, and suddenly the earth shakes and Sita is returned to the earth. Her name means the furrow in a plowed field. The earth closed over her and the whole universe was in harmony—at least for a moment

Rama says that he will never see Sita again as long as he lives on earth and that life is brief compared to the many lifetimes we live. According to the *Ramayana* the reign of Rama (and presumably his descendants) was 11,000 years. In the end, Rama wondered what his life was all about and was ready to return to Vishnu, of whom he was said to be an avatar. His time had come and as an old man he wandered out of the palace and down to the banks of the Sarayu River. And the *Ramayana* says:

> Even Brahma, the creator, came in person to see Rama. He spoke to Rama: "Come, O Vishnu, join your brothers, Lakshmana, Satrughna, and Bharata. Return to Vishnu. Return to heaven. Return to the source."

With Brahma's words, Rama smiled and stepped into the river. All of Rama's followers entered the river after him and all went to heaven. Rama was home. The *Ramayana* was loved and praised by all. The gods were pleased. Lava and Kusa traveled throughout India singing Valmiki's glorious poem about their father.

Wherever they went they said, "Men who listen to the *Ramayana* will live a long life. They will be free of sins and will have many sons. Women who listen to the *Ramayana* will be blessed with children like Rama and his brothers. All those who listen please Rama. Such is the glory of this story. May all

who recite it or listen to it regularly find increased love, wisdom, and strength."

And so the *Ramayana* ends with the cyclical propagation of the story, it having ended as it began, with the telling of the same story. This is a story that is thousands of years old, but also as current as today. Is the *Ramayana* telling us a story from 10,000 BC, 3,500 BC or 1945 AD? It is all the same story told over and over. And, as far as vimanas are concerned: we have them today and we had them yesterday.

In the next chapter, let us look at the flying machines of the ancients.

Ravana depicted as having 10 heads with Hanuman and Sita next to him.

CHAPTER FOUR

FLYING MACHINES OF THE ANCIENTS

To let understanding stop at what cannot be understood is a high attainment. Those who cannot do it will be destroyed on the lathe of heaven.

— *Chuang Tzu (286 BC)*

Cukra flying in his swift and powerful vimana hurled against the three cities of the Vrishnis and Andhakas a single projectile charged with all the power in the Universe. An incandescent column of smoke and fire, as brilliant as ten thousand suns, rose in all its splendor.

— Mahabharata

Throughout history there have been tales of flight—from flying carpets to Ezekiel's fiery wheels within wheels. Within the legends of ancient history there are countless stories of flying people, flying chariots, flying horses, and other airborne items usually dismissed as fantasy and myth.

In his book *Wonders of Ancient Chinese Science*[28] Robert Silverburg says that Chinese myths tell of a legendary people, the Chi-Kung, who traveled in "aerial carriages." In the ancient Chinese chronicle *Records of the Scholars* it is recorded that the great Han Dynasty astronomer and engineer Chang Heng made a flying device. It was, says Silverburg, "[a] wooden bird with a mechanism in its belly that allowed it to fly nearly a mile." Continues Silverburg:

> Propellers seem to be described in a book written about 320 by Ko Hung, an alchemist and mystic: "Some have made flying cars with wood

from the inner part of the jujube tree, using ox leather straps fastened to revolving blades so as to set the machine in motion... "[28]

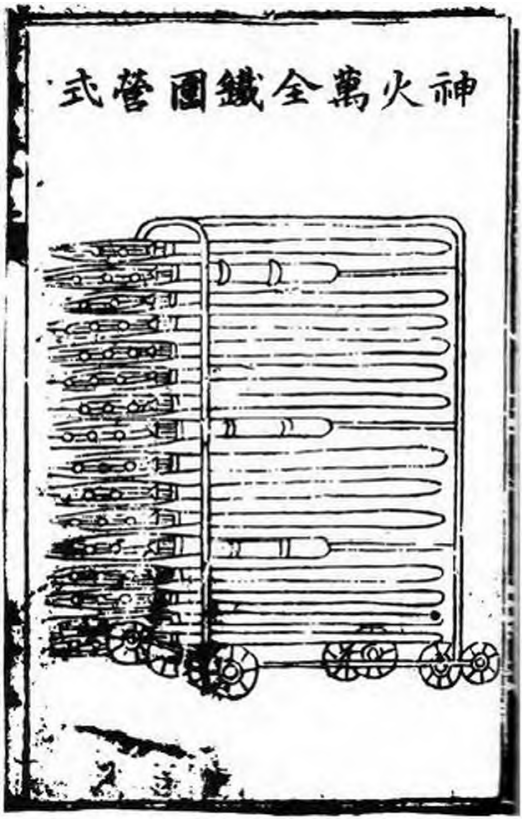
The development of modern spaceflight, including experimentation with manned rockets, can be traced to the early use of gunpowder in China. Charcoal and sulfur had long been known as ingredients for incendiary mixtures. As early as 1044 the Chinese learned that saltpeter, added to such a mixture, made it fizz even more alarmingly. We do not know who first learned that if you grind charcoal, sulfur and saltpeter up very fine, mix them very thoroughly in the proportion of 1:1:3.5 or 1:1:4, and pack the mixture into a dosed container, it will, when ignited, explode with a delightful bang. It has been suggested that experimenters, believing that salt made a fire hotter because it made it brighter, tried various salts until they stumbled on potassium nitrate or saltpeter.

The rocket probably evolved in a simple way from an incendiary arrow. If one wanted to make a fire arrow burn fiercely for several seconds using the new powder, one would have to pack the powder in a long thin tube to keep it from going off all at once. It would also be necessary to let the flame and smoke escape from one end of the tube. But, if the tube were open at the front end, the reaction of the discharge would be in the direction opposite to the flight of the arrow and would make the missile tumble wildly. If the tube were open to the rear, on the other hand, the explosion would help the arrow on its way.

Early on it was discovered that with a discharge to the rear the arrow did not even have to be shot from a bow. The forward pressure of the explosion inside the tube would move the device fast enough.

The Chinese created all manner of rocket-powered arrows, grenades and even iron bombs, very similar to those in use today. The first two-stage rocket is credited to the Chinese in the 11th century AD with their

development of "Fire Dragon" rocket. While on the way to its target, the "Fire Dragon" ignited fire arrows that flew from the dragon's mouth. An early two-stage cluster bomb rocketl



A drawing of a Chinese flamethrower from a book, circa 1350.

When the Mongol army attacked Kaifeng—once the capital of the Sung but now that of the Jin Dynasty—in 1232, the armies of the Jin checked the

invincible Mongols for a while by using secret weapons. One, called "heaven-shaking thunder," was an iron bomb lowered by a chain from the city's walls to explode among the foe. The other, an early rocket called an "arrow of flying fire," whistled among the Mongols with much noise and smoke and stampeded their ponies.[13]

The stampeding of horses, or worse yet, war elephants, was one of the primary uses of the early war rockets. It is known that war rockets were used not only in ancient China, but also in ancient India and Southeast Asia. These countries traditionally fought with heavily armored war elephants. A few exploding rockets sent into the middle of a troop of mounted soldiers could throw an entire army into chaos.

Indeed, if some sort of flying vehicle or giant two-stage rocket could belch fire and scare horses and war elephants enough to cause panic and havoc, then a whole invasion force might be persuaded then and there to cease their destructive march forward and turn back to their own country. As we have seen, something like this did happen to Alexander the Great, and his generals refused to continue forward. What other attacking armies were suddenly stopped in ancient China or India when a fire-belching dragon-rocket roared into the sky toward an invading army and spewed small fiery arrows into the crowd? Another effective way of stopping an invading army is to slip an assassin into the camp at night and kill the top general in charge.

Starting thousands of years ago, gunpowder was used in the making of hand grenades, rockets, Roman candles, bombs and even manned craft. We have already heard the story of the Chinese inventor named Wan Hoo who attached 47 skyrockets to a large chair, above which he fastened two large kites. After strapping himself to the chair the skyrockets were lit and he vanished into the sky in a trail of smoke and fire, much like the legendary dragons of Chinese folklore.

There is evidence that bombs and gunpowder were used at the time of Christ and before—however, strictly speaking, it was not yet "gunpowder" because the gun had not been invented. According to L. Sprague de Camp in *The Ancient Engineers,*[13] at some date in the third century AD an otherwise unknown Marchus or "Mark the Greek" wrote *Liber ignium,* or *The Book of Fire*. Marchus told how to make explosive powder by mixing "one pound of live sulfur, two of charcoal and six of salt-peter." This would produce a weak explosion. In the 13th century, Albertus Magnus gave the same formula as Marchus, while Albertus' contemporary Roger Bacon recommended "seven parts of saltpeter, five of young hazelnut wood and five of sulfur." This would also cause something of a bang.

About 1280 AD the Syrian al-Hasan ar-Rammah wrote *The Book of Fighting on Horseback and with War Engines*. Ar-Rammah told of the importance of saltpeter in incendiary compounds and gave careful directions for purifying it. He also told of rockets, which he called "Chinese arrows." The Chinese also created the first Roman candles, flame throwers and mortars, say modern scholars. Early Roman candles had alternate packings of loose and compressed powder, along with a few nails or small stones, so that as the powder burned down from the muzzle, the solid lumps were thrown out and burned as they flew.[13]

The Roman candle was as close as the Chinese came to the invention of the gun. The invention of the real gun is an obscure and disputed event, generally thought to have taken place in Germany. The "Chronicle of the City of Ghent" for 1313 states that "in this year the use of guns (bussen) was found for the first time by a monk in Germany." A manuscript published in 1326, Walter de Milemete's "De officiis regun," shows a primitive gun called a vasa or vase. This is a bottle-shaped device for shooting massive darts. An Italian manuscript of the same year mentions guns. By the 1340s, Edward III of England and the cities of Aachen and Cambrai all paid bills for guns and

powder.[13]

Prehistoric Aircraft: From Airplane Models to Flying Chariots

The development of modern weapons was immediately followed by the development of aviation. This was initially quite successful and sparked the imagination of the entire world. By the mid-1800s balloons were a common sight in most major cities of the world. Powered flight, designed after the shape of birds' wings, came shortly afterwards.

But what of ancient flight? Were the Wright brothers really the first to fly through the air on a powered vehicle? Clearly Wan Hoo would argue the point if he could.

When American scientists expressed surprise at the sophistication of the Antikythera Device by saying that it was "like finding a jet plane in the Tomb of King Tut," they weren't far off the mark. Models of what appear to be jet planes have been found in tombs in Colombia, and in Egypt as well.

Several small delta-winged gold "jets" can be found in the Colombian government's Gold Museum in Bogota. The small models are thought to be at least 1,000 years old, if not more. They are variously said to be models of bees, flying fish or other animals, however, unlike any known animal, they have vertical and horizontal tail fins.

When these zoomorphic objects were photographed in a V-formation with nine original artifacts, they looked amazingly like a squadron of delta-wing jets! Ivan T. Sanderson says in his book *Investigating the Unexplained*[74] that a similar object was on display at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. The label said it was "probably meant to represent a flying fish."

These gold zoomorphic models were dated as probably from 800 to 1,000 years old. Gold is indestructible, however, and all the gold jewelry and coinage from ancient times still exists today in one form or another. In many cases it has been melted down and reformed into gold bars or new

jewelry. Other metals will eventually corrode and oxidize, but, as pointed out previously, gold jewelry or trinkets could be traded for hundreds, even thousands, of years.

Says Andrew Tomas in his book *We Are Not the First:*[24]

One of the first aeronautical designers in the world was Daedalus. He constructed wings for his son Icarus and himself but in piloting his glider the boy flew too high and fell into the sea which is now called the Icarian Sea. The Wright brothers were more fortunate 4,500 years later because the basis for aviation technology had already been developed before them.

It is erroneous to think that Daedalus belongs to mythology. His colleagues—the engineers of Knossos— constructed water chutes in parabolic curves to conform exactly to the natural flow of water. Only long centuries of science could have produced such streamlining. And the streamline is also an essential part of aerodynamics, which Daedalus might have mastered.

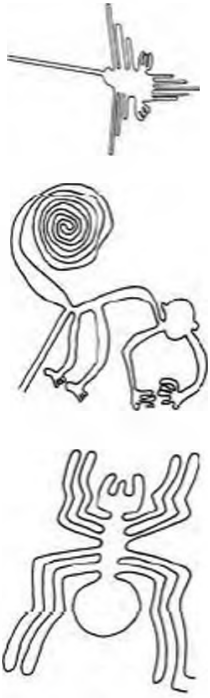
Friar Roger Bacon left a mysterious sentence in one of his works: "Flying machines as these were of old, and are made even in our days." A statement like that, written in the thirteenth century, is enigmatic, indeed. First of all, Bacon affirmed that engines flying in the air had been a reality in a bygone era, and secondly, that they existed in his day. Both possibilities seem to be farfetched and yet history is replete with legends as well as chronicles of airships in the remote past.

Perhaps more striking are the Chinese annals which relate that Emperor

Shun (c. 2258-2208 BC) constructed not only a flying apparatus but even made a parachute about the same time as Daedalus built his gliders.[24]

Circa 300 BC, the Chinese poet Chu Yuan wrote of his flight in a jade chariot at a high altitude over the Gobi Desert toward the snow-capped Kunlun Mountains in the west. Says Tomas, "He accurately described how the aircraft was unaffected by the winds and dust of the Gobi, and how he conducted an aerial survey."[24]

Chinese folklore is replete with tales about flying chariots and other tales of flight. Tomas mentions that a stone carving on a grave in the province of Shantung, dated AD 147, depicts a dragon chariot flying high above the clouds. And, as mentioned earlier, the fourth century AD Chinese historian Ko Hung might have been describing a type of helicopter when he wrote about "flying cars with wood from the inner part of the jujube tree, using ox leather straps fastened to rotating blades to set the machine in motion." Leonardo da Vinci had also designed a functional helicopter, possibly from Chinese designs. Helicopters, unlike gliders, do not need long landing areas, but they are much more difficult to control. However, a combination of a balloon with propellers to help move the craft would be a technical feat well within the capability of the dynastic Chinese. Even our own early aircraft, such as the plane made by the famous Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk in North Carolina, were fairly crude constructs of wood, canvas and rope.



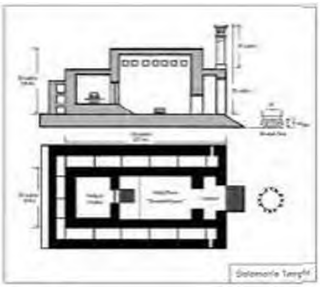
Figures at Nazca.

Jim Woodman and his pals experimented with similar technology when they built a reed basket in Peru and then floated it above the Nazca Plain with a crude hot air balloon made of native fibers and woven cloth. The craft was named the *Condor I*, and Woodman wrote about it in the 1977 book *Nazca: Journey to the Sun*.[97] He and his friends rose to over 1,200 feet in the craft and landed successfully, with no one hurt. Woodman believed that the Nazca lines, which can only be fully viewed from the air, were seen by ancient Nazca priests who flew over the desert plain in primitive, but effective, hot air balloons.

This event—and the recreation of it—has been very popular in Japan, and a number of television documentaries have been produced in that country that have focused on early balloon exploits such as that theorized by Woodman. Indeed, stories of man-lifting kites are popular in Japan and a very well known tale is that of a 12th century samurai hero named Tametamo who helps his son escape from an island where they have been exiled by lashing him to a giant kite with which he is able to fly through the air to the Japanese mainland. Glider, balloon and man-lifting kite devices are fascinating in themselves, but when we are thinking about vimanas, we are looking at powered flight much as we have today. In this way we expect vimana technology to be something similar to what we have today, including electricity and mechanical devices and controls.

The Airships of King Solomon

A number of historical characters have been said to have had airships or flying chariots. One such famous person was the Hebrew King Solomon the Wise, the son of David. Solomon was the last ruler of a United Israel and ruled circa 970-931 BC. After his death Israel split into Judah in the south and Israel in the north. His descendants ruled Judah.



He was known for being very worldly, having many wives (many from

far-off countries), and for sending Phoenician ships on a mysterious three-year journey a land of plentiful gold: Ophir. During a three-year journey from the Red Sea port of Ezion Geber (Eilat), an important port city to ancient Israel as it is to modern Israel, a fleet of ships would have had a year to make the long journey, a year to stay in Ophir and grow a crop of food if they needed to, and a year to return. They could have gone quite a distance in one year—and would certainly have traveled beyond the near countries in the Indian Ocean during that time. They were probably going to Australia, Indonesia and even Peru in their search for shiploads of gold. The Bible says such treasure was collected, along with valuable spices, feathers and even exotic animals such as apes.

Solomon is said to have used this fabulous gold treasure to build the famous Temple in Jerusalem to hold the Ark of the Covenant, which was apparently some sort of electrical device. Solomon built his temple on top of a gigantic wall of granite ashlars that formed a super-megalithic platform that was nearly identical to the one at Baalbek in nearby Lebanon. These gigantic cut stones are incredibly old and at Baalbek a Roman temple has been built on top of the older platform. These blocks of granite weigh hundreds of tons. The giant blocks at Jerusalem cannot be clearly seen because Solomon's Temple Wall is on top of them. Other structures were built up next to the wall so that a tunnel actually had to be dug around the wall in order to excavate its base and reveal the stones.

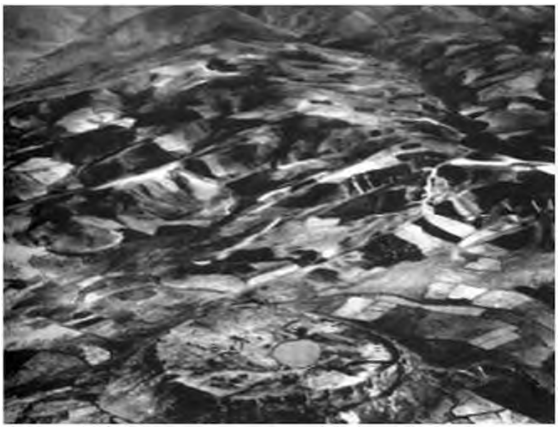
Solomon showing his advisors the plans fror his temple.

Solomon had a romantic affair with the Ethiopian Queen of Sheba who had come to visit him in about 940 BC. According to ancient Ethiopian tradition, recorded in the *Kebra Negast*[34] ("Glory of Kings"—a sort of Ethiopian Old Testament that is the most important document to all Ethiopians) the reigning Queen, Makeda, left Axum, then the capital of Saba, and journeyed across the Red Sea to present day Yemen and up the Hijaz Mountains of Saudi Arabia to Jerusalem to visit the court of King Solomon. Seeing the important Ark of the Covenant was a key goal of her visit.

After living with Solomon for some months, she returned to her own kingdom, where she bore King Solomon's son. He was named Menelik I, and it was with this child, later to become the king of Saba, that the Solomonic line of rulership over Ethiopia was begun. This line was unbroken for three thousand years until the death of Haile Selassie (born Ras Tafari, 225th Solomonic ruler) in August of 1975.

Solomon was known as someone who was very wise and it seems that he

had been to remote lands and possessed a vimana of some sort. According to the *Kebra Negast*, King Solomon would visit Makeda and his son Menelik by flying in a "heavenly car." Like today's aircraft passengers, he flew in one day a great distance:



The strange mountaintop in Iran called Solomon's Throne in an aerial photo.

> The king... and all who obeyed his word, flew on the wagon without pain and suffering, and without sweat or exhaustion, and traveled in one day a distance which took three months to traverse [on foot].[101]

We have here a portrait of king who literally had everything, including his own Air Force One to take on special trips throughout Asia and Africa. Had Solomon ever flown across the Pacific to Tonga, Easter Island and Peru? There are legends in Asia that Solomon did make visits to Central Asia and Tibet. Throughout the Middle East, as far as Kashmir, are mountains known as the "Thrones of Solomon," including one in northwestern Iran, a

flat-topped mountain called Takht-i-Suleiman (Throne of Solomon). It has been conjectured that these may have been landing bases for Solomon's airship.

The Russian-American explorer, mystic and painter Nicholas Roerich testifies that throughout Central Asia it is widely believed that Solomon flew about in an airship:

Solomon visiting Sheba is this cartoon version of the *Kebra Negast*.

Up to now, in the people's conception, King Solomon soars on his miraculous flying device over the vast spaces of Asia. Many mountains in Asia are either with ruins or stones bearing the imprint of his foot or of his knees, as evidence of his long-enduring prayers. These are the so-called thrones of Solomon. The Great King flew to these mountains, he reached all heights, he left behind him the cares of rulership and here refreshed his spirit.[93]

Roerich described in his book *Altai-Himalaya*[93] a UFO sighting in 1926 of

a silvery oval-shaped object in northern China as he headed to Tibet:

> On August fifth—something remarkable! We were in our camp in the Kukunor district not far from the Humbolt Chain. In the morning about half-past nine some of our caravaneers noticed a remarkably big black eagle flying above us. Seven of us began to watch the unusual bird. At this same moment another of our caravaneers remarked "There is something above the bird."
>
> And he shouted in his astonishement. We all saw, in a direction north to south, something big and shiny reflecting sun, like a huge oval moving at great speed. Crossing our camp this thing changed in its direction from south to southwest. And we saw how it disappeared in the intense blue sky. We even had time to take our field glasses and saw quite distinctly an oval form with shiny surface, one side of which was brilliant from the sun.[90]

Roerich and his wife Helena collected very large quartz crystals on their journeys, plus they were the authors of a number of mystical books that included discussions of vimanas and the great Buddhist-Hindu past of Masters who still possessed vimanas, magical machines and hidden fortresses deep in the remotest parts of the Altai Himalaya, Gobi Desert and Tibet. Roerich was familiar with Madame Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society and he recognized that much of her work was derived from Central Asian legends of vimanas and the Land of the Immortals in the Kunlun Range of northern Tibet—the land of Hsi Wang Mu. This Shangri-La place held a "cave of the ancients" with a secret city inside a mountain, various Arhats, Immortals and Masters did what they could to guide mankind in a spiritual direction from this fortress of solitude.

The gold "vimana" plane from Colombia.

Did King Solomon have some flying vehicle with which he flew to Persia, India and Tibet? With whom did he meet there? Given the many stories of flying vehicles from the ancient Indian epics, this is not so unusual. Mountains with ruins on their summits that include large grassy areas, do indeed exist all over the world.

Were these mountaintop landing pads, built for the parking of flying vehicles that were similar to airships or zeppelins? We live on a strange planet—one full of impressive megalithic cities along these lines like Machu Picchu, the mountaintop city in Peru. Similar huge airship fields are found directly in front of the megalithic walls of Sacsayhuaman above Cuzco. It is a strange world, full of strange stories, legends and ancient mysteries. Sometimes, indeed, "truth is stranger than fiction!"

The Sky Gods and their Vimanas

Author Andrew Tomas was an early writer on vimanas in the late 1960s and 70s and he says that one of the world's oldest books on astronomy is the Hindu Sut-ya Siddhanta. It speaks of Siddhas and Vidlyahat-as, or philosophers and scientists, who were able to orbit the earth in a former epoch "below the moon but above the clouds."

Says Tomas:

Another book from India—the *Samaranagana Sutradhara—contains* a fantastic paragraph about the distant past when men flew in the air in sky-ships and heavenly beings came down from the sky. Was there a sort of two-way space traffic in a forgotten era?

In his essay on the *Rig Veda* Professor H. L. Hariyappa of Mysore University writes that in a distant epoch "gods came to the earth often times," and that it was "the privilege of some men to visit the immortals in heaven." The tradition of India is insistent upon the reality of this communication with other worlds during the Golden Age.

Old Sanskrit texts speak of the Nagas, or Serpent Gods, who live in underground palaces lighted by luminous gems in the vastness of the Himalayas. The Nagas are flying creatures who go on long voyages in the sky. The belief in the Nagas is so firmly imprinted in the national consciousness of India that even today motion pictures and stage plays exploit this theme to the delight of Indian audiences. The subterranean city of the Nagas—Bhogawati—brilliantly illuminated by diamonds, may perhaps be a folklore image of a space base, lighted and air-conditioned. We wonder if these cosmonauts are still there?

The god Garuda is thought by Brahmins to be a combination of man and bird who travels through space. He is believed to have reached the moon and even the Pole Star, which is fifty light-years away from us.

The fifth volume of the Mahabharata contains a passage which has but one meaning—that of life on other planets: "Infinite is the space populated by the perfect ones and gods; there is no limit to their delightful abodes."[24]

Tales of the descent of skygods to earth can be found all over the globe.

The New Testament contains a meaningful passage: "Remember to show hospitality. There are some who by so doing, have entertained angels without knowing it." (Heb. 13:2). One wonders if angels really need entertaining, but pilots and astronauts can always use a good square meall

The ancient Assyrian and Sumerian symbol for a vimana: a winged disk.

Myths have developed even in recent history. Since their introduction to Western goods with the arrival of missionairies in the late 1800s, Cargo Cults of Melanesia held the strange belief that "cargo," or manufactured articles such as knives, tinned foods, soap or toothbrushes, would be brought to their Stone Age tribes by "big canoes" or "big birds." When American planes dropped loads of foodstuffs and supplies in the jungle for the advancing Australian and American troops in 1943, the natives took this as a fulfillment of the myth. After the war they continued to build mock airstrips for the big birds to deliver "cargo." They even constructed immense warehouses for the expected goods. Having seen radio installations, they erected masts with aerials and "radio sets" of bamboo by means of which they expected to contact the "gods." Part of their belief was that their dead ancestors were sending all this free food and clothing in the form of "cargo."

Influenced by Christianity, some thought they could talk to Jesus Christ or "John Frum" on these bamboo radio transmitters. But throughout all of these naive beliefs there was some basis in reality: the "big birds" (airplanes), the "big canoes" (steamships), and the "cargo" were all quite real.

In like manner the ancient legends of "gods descending upon earth" and an era when "men and gods" mixed could be a folk memory of an epoch when skyships cruised the planet, landing at certain airports in larger cities. As noted above, many ancient cities, such as those in South and Central America, have huge open spaces in front of them, or in the middle of the city—flat fields capable of landing large airships.

In his book, *Timeless Earth,*[43] Italian archeologist and author Peter Kolosimo mentions vimanas in connection with the ancient Hindu texts and a slightly different version of the missile hurled at the "triple city":

> As we saw, the vimana appears to have been some kind of aerial vehicle, but it would take many pages to quote and analyze all the references to it in Indian and Tibetan texts.
>
> The *Ramayana,* the great Indian epic which relates the adventures of Rama, is attributed to the poet Valmiki, but no doubt derives in part from earlier work. It speaks of the "fiery chariots" as follows: "Bhima flew along in his car, resplendent as the sun and loud as thunder... The flying chariot shone like a flame in the night sky of summer... It swept by like a comet...

It was as if two suns were shining... Then the chariot rose up and all the heavens brightened."

In the *Mahavira of Bhavabhuti* (eighth century AD) we read: "An aerial chariot, the Pushpaka, conveys many people to the ancient capital of Ayodha. The sky is full of stupendous flying machines, dark as night, but picked out by lights with a yellowish glare."

Until recent years such accounts may have been considered mere fables, but in the nuclear age we cannot help recognizing in the ancient descriptions reactors, rockets and spaceships. The Vedas, moreover, tell us of vimanas of various types and sizes: the agnihotra-vimana with two engines, the "elephant vimana" with more, and other types named after the kingfisher, ibis, etc., very much as we now christen various types of aircraft and missile.

The *Mausolaparvan* (part of the *Mahabharata)* says: "It was an unknown weapon, an iron thunderbolt, a gignatic messenger of death that burnt to ashes all the descendants of Andhaka and Vrishni. Their corpses were feature-less, the hair and nails fell away, vessels broke into fragments without cause, the birds turned white. Within a few hours every food became unwholesome." And again: "Cukra, flying in a vimana of great power, hurled at the triple city a missile weighted with all the force of the

universe. An incandescent smoke, like ten thousand suns, rose in all its splendor."

Are these mere myths, the product of the ancient writers' fantasy? The column of blazing smoke, an explosion brighter than the sun, hair and nails falling out, contaminated food, animals and birds losing their color—none of these details would be out of place in a description of atomic warfare. The vedic authors may indeed have strong imaginations, but this seems to go beyond coincidence.

Continuing in his book, *Timeless Earth,*[43] Peter Kolosimo discusses the fascinating issue of whether atomic weapons were used in ancient India:

The Indian sources, moreover, do not confine themselves to ordinary atomic weapons. There is the *Saura,* a kind of giant H-bomb, the *Agniratha,* a remote-controlled jet bomber, the *Sikharastra* bomb with napalm-like effects, the *Avidiastra,* which attacks the enemy's nerve system. Again we read in Bhavabhuti's account: "The sage, putting his confidence in Brahma, instructed him in all secrets and in the use of powerful weapons inducing sleep *(prasvapana),* and of a fire that would reduce to ashes the great army of Kumbhakarna." As though the conventional armament of those days was not enough! Or here again is the description of a super-bomb from the *Dronaparvan (Mahabharata,* book vii): "They launched a huge missile of burning fire without smoke, and thick darkness fell upon the armies and on everything. A terrible wind arose, and blood-colored clouds swept down on to the earth: nature went mad, and the sun revolved upon itself. The enemy fell like shrubs consumed by the fire, the rivers boiled and those who had dived into them perished miserably. The forests burnt; horses and elephants plunged wildly through them, neighing and trumpeting. When the wind had cleared away the smoke we

beheld thousands of corpses burnt to ashes."

Here, finally, is the account in the *Dronaparvan* of "Brahma's weapon": "The son of Drona hurled the weapon and great winds arose; the waters rushed upon the earth. The soldiers were deafened by peals of thunder, the earth shook, the waters rose up, the mountains split asunder."

Here again we cannot suppose that this is pure mythology without a basis of fact: imagination, however lively, could not have described vehicles and weapons with such accuracy.[43]

A drawing of the Pushpak vimana here drawn by two huge swans.

It is interesting to note here that even though the princes and armies of the time had these vimanas and terrible weapons, they were also using horses and elephants just as they would be used in more historic times. The whole scene seems like a science fiction fantasy dream: they are dressed in golden helmets and flowing garments, adorned with jewels and elegant sandals, probably carrying a small sword or dagger with them. They have horses and horse-drawn chariots plus the large work elephants still popular in India and Southeast Asia today. But they also have electricity, technological devices, vimanas and devastating weapons of a sophisticated nature. It is

much like the world of India and Southeast Asia today, without the cars and choking smog, or the television commercials. The world of yesterday is tomorrow—and vice versa.

Legends and Histories of Levitation

Physicists tell us that there are several "forces" acting on us at any given time. These force are atomic force, electrical force, magnetic force, and finally, gravitational force. Gravity is the weakest, and least understood of all the forces. Paradoxically, the weakest force is the most difficult to master because we know so little about it. However, levitation, a sort of cancellation of gravitational force, has been known to occur—at least in the historical record!

Says Tomas in his book *We Are Not the First:*

Some of the most incredible tales of antiquity concern levitation or the power to neutralize gravity. Francois Lenormant writes in *Chaldean Magic* that by means of sounds the priests of ancient Babylon were able to raise into the air heavy rocks which a thousand men could not have lifted.

Is this how Baalbek was erected? The gigantic slab left in the quarry at the foot of the Baalbek Terrace by the Titans who had built it is 21 meters

long, 4.8 wide, and 4.2 deep. Forty thousand workers would be needed in order to move this huge mass. The question is, how could such a multitude have had access to the slab in order to lift it? Moreover, even in this brilliant era of technology there is not a crane in the world today that could raise this monolith from the quarry!

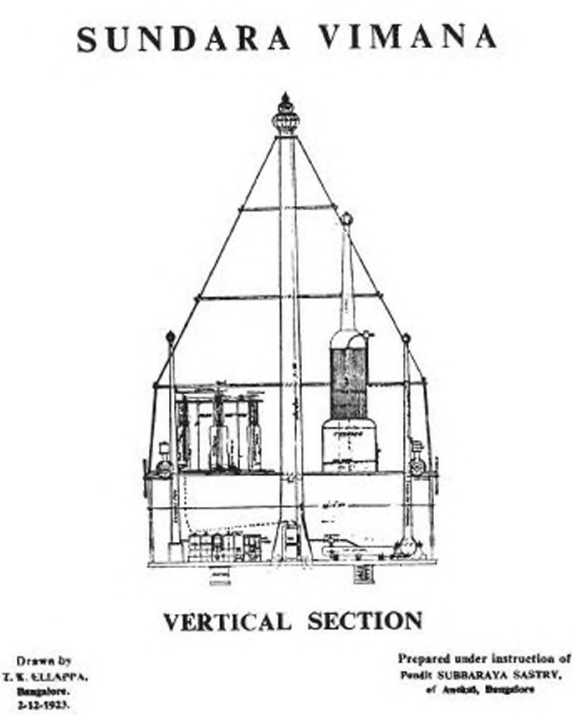
Certain Arab sources contain curious tales about the manner in which the pyramids of Egypt were erected. According to one, the stones were wrapped in papyrus and then struck with a rod by a priest. Thus they became completely weightless and moved through the air for about 50 meters. Then the hierophant repeated the procedure until the stone reached the pyramid and was put in place. This would explain the absence of chips on edges of the stone blocks for which the author searched in vain and the joints into which it is impossible to insert a sheet of paper. Even though the Khufu pyramid is no longer the tallest edifice in the world, it is still the biggest megalithic structure on earth.

Babylonian tablets affirm that sound could lift stones. The Bible speaks of Jericho and what sound waves did to its walls. Coptic writings relate the process by which blocks for the pyramids were elevated by the sound of chanting. However, at the present level of our knowledge we can establish no connection between sound and weightlessness.[24]

Tomas also mentions that the Greek philosopher Lucian (second century AD) testified to the reality of antigravity feats in ancient history. Speaking about the god Apollo in a temple in Hierapolis, Syria, Lucian related a wonder that he witnessed himself: "Apollo left the priests on the floor and was born aloft."[24]

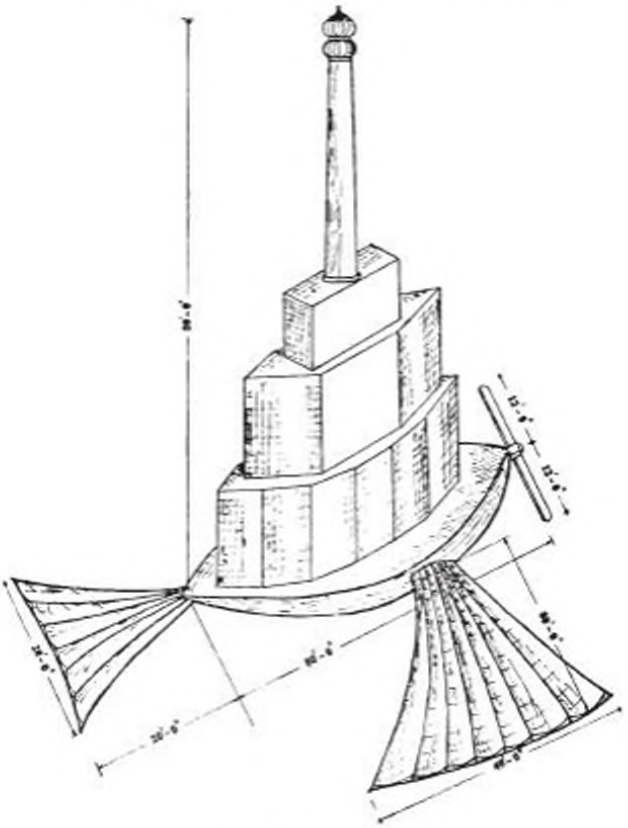
That the ancients were able to somehow quarry and ultimately levitate the huge blocks of Baalbek into place is indicative of a culture with some very advanced technology. They probably had power tools and electricity—and

even flight. The ancient world is now starting to look clearer to us as we look back through a glass darkly. It is a world of great cities, of amazing achievements and of skies full of airships called vimanas.



A 1923 conceptional drawing of the Sundara vimana.

SHAKUNA VIMANA



PERSPECTIVE VIEW

Drawn by
T. K. ELLAPPA,
Bangalore.
2-12-1923.

Prepared under instruction of
Pandit SUBBARAYA SASTRY,
of Anekal, Bangalore.

A 1923 conceptional drawing of the Shakuna vimana.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE VIMANIKA SHASTRA BOOK

Dark the descent: the birds are golden-colored; up to the heaven they fly robed in the waters. Again descend they from the seat of Order, and all the earth is moistened with their fatness.

—The Rig Veda RV 1.164.47-48 (trans. Griffith)

The *Vimanika Shastra*, (sometimes spelled in a variety of ways, including *Vaimanika Shastra* and *Vymaanika-Shaastra)* is a famous and controversial text on the subject of vimanas said to be the work of "Maharishi Bharadwajy." It is something of a "Vimanas from A to Z" sort of book, and though it goes into detail about ancient flying machines, its authorship is somewhat complicated, to say the least. Apparently, ancient Sanskrit authors occasionally referred to this book and Maharishi Bharadwajy was an acknowledged writer on all sorts of topics who lived approximately 400 BC.

A book called the *Vimanika Shastra* seems to have been kept in ancient libraries, but locating copies is apparently very difficult today. A copy was said to be found in the Royal Baroda Library in 1908 and then studied by a local Sanskrit scholar living in Mysore named Subraaya Sastri (or Sastry) (1866–1940)—a man who was known to study many ancient Sanskrit texts. Sanskrit is currently a dead language, in a similar way as Latin is a dead language. Modern Hindi is similar to Sanskrit, which was preceded by other scripts such as Pali and Brahmi.

The current version of the *Vimanika Shastra* is an edited version taken from notebooks that were dictated and in a sense "channeled" by Pandit Subraaya Sastri during the years 1918–1923. Subraaya Sastri was a mystic from Anekal, who was reputed to speak out verses *(slokas)* whenever he got

inspiration, described by author G.R. Josyer as "a walking lexicon gifted with occult perception." According to Josyer, he dictated the text to G. Venkatachala Sharma. Hindus sometimes call accessing ancient records as "reading the Akashic record" in which everything in the past has been imprinted. Whether Subraaya Sastri was reading the Akashic record concerning this legendary ancient book, or was "channeling" Maharishi Bharadwaja (or Bharadwajy), we just do not know.

Subraaya Sastri died in 1940, and Venkatachala Sharma took his manuscripts into keeping. "The Vimanika Shastra" manuscript appeared at Rajakiya Sanskrit Library, Baroda by 1944. The text was published in Hindi in 1959 and later in 1973 in English by G.R. Josyer. Josyer's edition also added illustrations drawn by T. K. Ellappa, a draughtsman at a local engineering college in Bangalore, under the direction of Sastri, which had been missed in the 1959 edition.

Other versions of the book may exist. Swami Dayananda Saraswati in his comprehensive treatise on the *Rig Veda* written in 1875 references the *Vimanika Shastra* in his commentary, as well as other manuscripts on vimanas.[3]

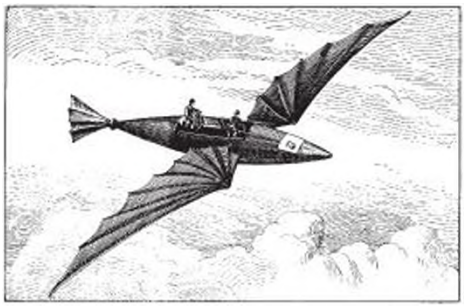
G.R. Josyer announced the existence of Sastri's book in a 1952 press release where he also announced his "International Academy of Sanskrit Research" in Mysore. In the foreword to the 1973 publication that contained the full Sanskrit text with English translation, Josyer quotes a 1952 press release he says was published by leading newspapers of India at the time, and was taken up by Reuters and other World Press News Services:

> Mr. G. R. Josyer, Director of the International Academy of Sanskrit Research in Mysore, in the course of an interview recently, showed some very ancient manuscripts which the Academy had collected. He claimed that the manuscripts were several thousands of years old, compiled by

ancient rishis, Bharadwaja, Narada and others, dealing, not with the mysticism of ancient Hindu philosophy of Atman or Brahman, but with more mundane things vital for the existence of man and progress of nations both in times of peace and war. ...One manuscript dealt with Aeronautics, construction of various types of aircraft for civil aviation and for warfare. ...Mr. Josyer showed some types of designs and drawings of a helicopter-type cargo-loading plane, specially meant for carrying combustibles and ammunition, passenger aircraft carrying 400 to 500 persons, double and treble-decked aircraft. Each of these types had been fully described.

Josyer then tells how he was visited by "Miss Jean Lyon, journalist of Toronto and New York" for an interview, and how Lyon in her travel book *Just Half a World Away* (1954) mentioned his fascination with vimanas but concluded that he was "guilty of a rabid nationalism, seeking to wipe out everything since the Vedas."

Reviews of his book in Indian newspapers were marginal at best and one critical review pronounced Josyer's introduction to Sastri's book to be "least scholarly by any standards. and glorify whatever they can find about our past, even without valid evidence."



Unlike modern treatises on aeronautics that begin by discussing the general principles of flight before detailing concepts of aircraft design, the *Vimanika Shastra* does not begin with any introductory material on the concept of flight but goes straightaway to the description of a vimana, the pilot, aerial routes, food, clothing, metals, metal production, mirrors and their uses in wars, varieties of machinery and yantras, vimanas like 'mantrik,' 'tantrik,' and 'kritak' plus four types of vimanas that are called *Shakuna, Sundara, Rukma* and *Tripura,* which are described in greater detail. The book ends with a salute to Subraaya Sastri and Maharishi Bharadwaja and mentioning that this is part of a larger book called *All About Machines* or *Encyclopedia of Machines*. The *Vimanika Shastra* is supposed to be one of 40 books within the great work by Bharadwaja and other sages called *Yantra Sarvaswa (All About Machines)*. The book was written for "the benefit of all mankind."

The *Vimanika Shastra* refers to 97 past works and authorities, of which at least 20 works deal with the mechanism of vimanas, but none of these works are now traceable.[3]

Says the *Vimanika Shastra* about itself:

> In this book are described in 8 pregnant and captivating chapters, the arts of manufacturing various types of Aeroplanes of smooth and comfortable travel in the sky, as a unifying force for the Universe, contributive to the well-being of mankind.
>
> That which can go by its own force, like a bird, on earth, or water, or in air, is called 'Vimana.'
>
> That which can travel in the sky, from place to place, land to land, or globe to globe, is called 'Vimana' by scientists in Aeronautics.[48]

The ancient manuscript is laid out in eight initial chapters that treat the following topics:

- The secrets of constructing aeroplanes, which will not break, which cannot be cut, will not catch fire, and cannot be destroyed.
- The secret of making planes motionless.
- The secret of making planes invisible.
- The secret of hearing conversations and other sounds in enemy planes.
- The secret of retrieving photographs of the interior of enemy planes.
- The secret of ascertaining the direction of enemy planes approach.
- The secret of making persons in enemy planes' lose consciousness.
- The secret of destroying enemy planes.

The book then ends with chapters specifically on the construction and power mechanisms of the Shakuna Vimana, the Sundara Vimana, the Rukma Vimana and the Tripura Vimana. A section of illustrations of these vimanas and their electric generators follows the text in the 1972 book published by Josyer. The actual text goes into great detail and gives such information and advice as:

... "Just as our body, if complete in all its limbs, can achieve all things, so an Aeroplane should be complete in all its parts in order to be effective. Commencing from the photographing-mirror underneath, an aeroplane should have 31 parts."

"The pilot should be provided with different materials of clothing according to differences in seasons, as prescribed by Agnimitra."

"Three varieties of food should be given to pilots, varying with the seasons of the year, as Kalpa-Sastra. 25 kinds of poisons which arise in the

seasons are destroyed by the above changes in diet."

"Food is of five forms, cooked grain, gruel, paste, bread, and essence. All of them are wholesome and body-building."

"Metals suitable for Aeroplanes, light and heat-absorbing, are of sixteen kinds, according to Shaunaka. Great sages have declared that these metals alone are the best for aeroplane construction."[48]

Says Sanskrit literature professor Dileep Kumar Kanjilal, Ph.D. of the West Bengal Senior Educational Service in his 1985 India-published book *Vimana in Ancient India:*

Since the transcripts of the work date from early 20th century the authenticity of the Vai. Sastra may be pertinently questioned. On careful analysis it has been found that the work retained some antique features pertaining to an old Sastra. Like the Sutras of Panini the rules have been laid down in an aphoristic style with the explanation couched in Vrittis and Karikas. The Sutra style is to be found in the earliest works on grammar, Smrti and Philosophy, while the use of Karikas is as old as Batsyayana, Kautilya and others of the early Christian era. Bharadwaja as the author of a Srauta Satra and Smrti work is well-known and a sage Bharadwaja as the seer of the 6th Mandala of the Rg Veda is also well-known. Panini also referred to him in VII. II.63. Kautilya had also shown that Bharadwaja was an ancient author on Politics. The *Mahabharata (Santiparva* Ch. 58.3) refers to Bharadwaja as an author on politics. Authors on politics have very often been found to have written on the technical sciences also. The genuineness, therefore, of any treatise on technical sciences composed by Bharadwaja cannot be ignored.[3]

With the authenticity of the *Vimanika Shastra* verified for him, Professor

Kanjilal then struggles to ascertain the date in which Bharadwaja assembled the manuscript from earlier sources. According to Kanjilal, only four out of the 97 works and treatises quoted in the *Vimanika Shastra* are still extant. Says he: "It appears that most of these works were very old and are now lost."[3]

The *Vimanika Shastra* refers to no less than 36 authorities on various technical sciences, all of which date from at least the 8th century AD and most, from much earlier. Kanjilal says that chronologically the authorities mentioned in the *Vimanika Shastra* are: Valmiki, the legendary author of the *Ramayana* (circa 3000 to 1000 BC); Apastamba (450 BC); Gobhila (4th century BC); Usanas (3rd century BC); Vasistha (circa 2nd century BC); Atri (before the 3rd century BC as cited by the Sanskrit historian Manu); Garga, an astronomer and astrologer cited in the *Mahabharata* (Kanjilal places him prior to 500 BC, but he is more likely from a period much earlier, at least 900 BC); Vyasa, the legendary author of the *Mahabharata* (not to be confused with another Vyasa was a writer on "Smrti" who was much later, circa 200 AD); Angiras (c. 1st century AD according to Kanjilal); Gautama (Buddha? circa 500 BC); Jaimini (c. 500 BC); Gobhila, author of "Saruta" and "Grhyasutra" (c.500 BC); Saunaka (as author of the "Rkpratisakhya" he can be placed earlier than 500 BC); and Sakatayana (before the 5th century BC).[3]

The pilot should know five things... According to Shownaka, the regions of the sky are five, Named Rkhaapathhua, Mandala, Kakshya, Shakti and Kendra. In these 5 atmospheric regions, there are 515, 800 air way traversed

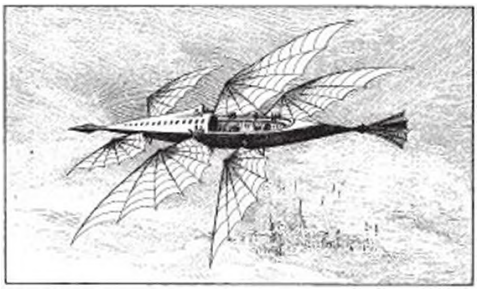
by vimanas of the Seven Lokas or worlds, known as: Bhooloka, Bhuvarloka, Suvarloka, Maholoka, Janoloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka.

— *The Vimanika Shastra*

Most of the above authorities are from the 5th century BC which Kanjilal thinks tends to place the origin of the *Vimanika Shastra* at the 4th century BC. However, there are anomalies in the list such Angiras and other authorities mentioned in the text, and authorities such as Lalla, Vachaspati Isvara and Samba (not mentioned above) may be from the period of the 6th century AD, says Kanjilal. Yet, it seems that none of these persons can be clearly identified, as these names, strange to Westerners, are quite common in Hindi/ Sanskrit, and while well-known persons having these names may have existed in the 5th, 6th or 9th century AD, the actual works sited by Bharadwaja are unknown. Therefore, the actual authors being referred to may easily be from the 5th century BC or earlier, as far as we know.

For instance, Kanjilal says that Samba may be the Samba who is the author of the "Samba Purana" of the late 9th century AD, or he may be the Samba who is identified in the *Mahabharata* as the son of Krishna—or another person entirely![3] Considering the thrust of Bharadwaja's *Vimanika Shastra,* the identity as Krishna's son is more likely, considering that two other persons from the *Mahabharata* are referenced.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the *Vimanika Shastra* was written, at the very latest, in the 10th century AD and apparently at the very earliest, in the 4th century BC. It is unquestionably taken entirely from earlier texts, as the author, Bharadwaja, himself says frequently. These ancient texts probably reference still earlier texts, many in Dravidian, which was perhaps the language of the Rama Empire. India is one of the only countries in which ancient books have actually survived the ravages of history and purposeful destruction of libraries, however, many ancient books have been lost.



There is a Wikipedia article on the *Vimanika Shastra* and it mentions me and my 1991 book *Vimana Aircraft of Ancient India and Atlantis* and my reprinting of some of the material from the book. Wikipedia ends its article with an interesting quote from someone named J.B. Hare of the Internet Sacred Text Archive who, in 2005, compiled an online edition of Josyer's 1973 book in his site's "UFOs" section. In his introduction, Hare makes these

comments and is apparently unaware of Kanjilal's investigation into the source of the book:

> The *Vimanika Shastra* was first committed to writing between 1918 and 1923, and nobody is claiming that it came from some mysterious antique manuscript. The fact is, there are no manuscripts of this text prior to 1918, and nobody is claiming that there are. So on one level, this is not a hoax. You just have to buy into the assumption that 'channeling' works. ...there is no exposition of the theory of aviation (let alone antigravity). In plain terms, the VS never directly explains how Vimanas get up in the air. The text is top-heavy with long lists of often bizarre ingredients used to construct various subsystems. ...There is nothing here which Jules Verne couldn't have dreamed up, no mention of exotic elements or advanced construction techniques. The 1923 technical illustrations based on the text... are absurdly un-aerodynamic. They look like brutalist wedding cakes, with minarets, huge ornithopter wings and dinky propellers. In other words, they look like typical early 20th century fantasy flying machines with an Indian twist.

A 1974 study by researchers at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore found that the heavier-than-air aircraft that the *Vimanika Shastra* described were aeronautically unfeasible. The authors remarked that the discussion of the principles of flight in the text were largely perfunctory and incorrect, in some cases violating Newton's laws of motion. The study concluded:

> Any reader by now would have concluded the obvious— that the planes described above are at best poor concoctions, rather than expressions of something real. None of the planes has properties or capabilities of being flown; the geometries are unimaginably horrendous from the point of view of flying; and the principles of propulsion make them resist rather

than assist flying. The text and the drawings do not correlate with each other even thematically. The drawings definitely point to a knowledge of modern machinery. This can be explained on the basis of the fact that Shri Ellappa who made the drawings was in a local engineering college and was thus familiar with names and details of some machinery. Of course the text retains a structure in language and content from which its 'recent nature' cannot be asserted. We must hasten to point out that this does not imply an oriental nature of the text at all. All that may be said is that thematically the drawings ought to be ruled out of discussion. And the text, as it stands, is incomplete and ambiguous by itself and incorrect at many places.

This would seem fantastic. One would think that modern engineers had exploited these forces to the nth degree, but the truth is that outside the common ram, or turbine, the ancients can teach us a thing or two.

—Jules Verne

Is the Vimanika Shastra a Channeled Text?

So, what are we to think about Sastri's book? It is a fascinating text, but as Hare points out, it would be virtually useless to try to build some working aircraft from its directions. While some Hindu scholars would not fully deem Subraaya Sastri's "inspired translation" as channeled material others do make a good point for the case, and it would seem to ultimately rest on what the definition of channeling is to someone. As mentioned in the Wikipedia article, Subraaya Sastri was a mystic from Anekal, a small town in the state of Karnataka, near Bangalore. He was reputed to speak out verses of Hindu texts, which he was apparently very knowledgeable of, and Josyer described him as "a walking lexicon gifted with occult perception."

One thing seems certain, Subraaya Sastri was some sort of super-genius

who was a walking and talking library of ancient texts, including all—or most all—of the known texts of the time, and he quoted from them constantly. He does not appear to be some simpleton. He was fully conscious of all the things he was writing and saying to people, and able to explain them as well. If he was making things up—which he may well have done—he was doing it as a super-scholar who was a walking encyclopedia.

Was he also using some form of channeling, automatic writing, psychic conversation or whatever to reach back into the past and access now-lost texts on vimanas, or dictated information from now-deceased vimana pilots and engineers? This would put Subraaya Sastri in the company of such famous psychic authors as Nostradamus, Edgar Cayce and others. Perhaps with Subraaya Sastri we have a combination of all of these things: scholar, genius, psychic and visionary futurist.

Like others, Subraaya Sastri, and later Josyer, put their own limited imaginations into their interpretations of the material they were being given, and some distortion or embellishment occurred. With the drawings done in 1923 by T.K. Ellappa, "prepared under instruction of Pandit Subraaya Sastri," we can only assume that they are visions of the two and interpreted by what they knew of electricity, aircraft of the time, and other powerful machines of the time such as trains and even tanks.

Yet, though we can be critical of them in retrospect and say that "none of the planes has properties or capabilities of being flown; the geometries are unimaginably horrendous from the point of view of flying; and the

principles of propulsion make them resist rather than assist flying," we might applaud them for tackling such a difficult task to begin with. They are criticized for their lack of modern aerospace knowledge and their "horrendous" designs, though this may—paradoxically—give credence to the book, as the designs for these vimanas—especially if liquid mercury is part of the mix—are unconventional to modern aerospace. Indeed, the descriptions of vimanas, whether the *Vimanika Shastra* is some sort of authentic document or not, are more like flying saucers, tubular airships and UFO-type craft than conventional aircraft of the last 150 years. Other descriptions are even stranger—those of flying palaces with many floors and rooms, like a huge space station.

Other Shastras and the Importance of Yantras

The Hindi word shastra comes from Sanskrit and in general means "rules." Generally, it is a suffix to technical manuals of different sorts, or of specialized knowledge in some field, usually mechanical. Like yantras, shastras are usually associated with some sort of technical or mechanical device or monument, since architecture and bridge-building are also in this field.

In Hindu and Buddhist literature there are a number of well-known scientific treatises called shastras: Vastu Shastra (architectural science), Shilpa Shastra (science of sculpture), Artha Shastra (economics), Bhautika Shastra (physics), Rasayana Shastra (chemistry), Jeeva Shastra (biology), and Neeti Shastra (political science).

Most shastra texts are acknowledged to be many thousands of years old and a certain revival of the special book *Vastu Shastra*, the ancient treatise on architecture, has occurred in the last century. To Subraaya Sastri, there must have been a *Vimana Shastra*, whether or not he had a tex. Perhaps with his psychic contact with Maharishi Bharadwaja, he successfully brought it back to the libraries of modern India and elsewhere.

In ancient India the Sanskrit word for "instrument" or "machine" was yantra. Yantra comes from the root *yam* meaning to control or subdue or "to restrain, curb, check." It can stand for automata and machinery, but also for symbols, processes, or anything that has structure and organization, depending on context.

In the West, as well as India, a popular form of the yantra is a geometrical figure, such as interlaced triangles, and is traditionally used in Hinduism and Buddhism as a mystical diagram for focusing and balancing the mind in a meditative state. Hindu, Buddhist, Tantric and other paintings often depict a yantra, or the similar mandala, as art that is an aid to meditation—simply contemplating a holographic-fractal-type geometrical design facilitate the ability to release the mind and come to center. Celtic designs such as the famous Celtic Knot are the same sort of yantra-mandala designs used for meditating. Such yantra-mandala images are often incorporated into jewelry, clothing and even music album covers.

Other yantras, however, are devices that have moving parts, complicated materials (often very special) and even electricity as part of their working order.

Sastri's book has all kinds of yantras in it, often weapons of some kind. There is the Apasmaara dhooma prasaarana yantra, "gas fume spreading machine" which is used "When the enemy plane is trying to destroy your

vimana. Apasmaara dhooma prasaarana yantra should be provided in the vimana to combat it. ...Apasmaara dhooma prasaarana yantra is prescribed for protection of vimana from enemy planes. It should be manufactured with kshoundeers metal only, and not with anything else."

There is also the Stambhana yantra or Halting Machine:

> When power is generated by conflicting forces in the water-charged regions, shrieking hurricanes and whirlwinds will arise and set out in a mad career of destruction. To safeguard against their onslaught, the Stambhana yantra should be installed in the bottom of the vimaana [throughout the book they use this spelling]. ...When the dreaded wind current is observed the switch or wheel for the contraction or folding of the expanded vimana parts should be turned, as also the 8 side wheel turning switches. That will reduce the speed of the vimaana. Then the switches of the 8 pivots on the peetha or foot-plate should be turned. The entire speed of the vimaana will be extinguished thereby. The wheel at the central pivot of the peetha should then be turned, so that the vimaana will be halted completely. Then the switch of the plane-wings should be turned. The flapping of the wings will produce winds which will encircle the vimaana and form a globe protecting it. Then by turning the switch of the brake-rod, the vimaana becomes motionless. Therefore the Yaana-stambhana yantra should be fixed the bottom of the vimaana.

The *Vimanika Shastra* then goes on to describe the Vyshvaanaranaala yantra:

> For the purpose of providing fire for passengers to perform agnihotra or daily fire rituals, and for the purpose of cooking food, Vyshvaanaranaala yantra is to be fitted up at the navel centre of the vimaana. ...to

provide fire for travelers in vimaanas, Vyshvaanara-naala yantra is now described. A 2 feet long and 12 inches wide peetha or footplate should be made out of naaga metal, quadrangular or circular in shape. Three kendras or spots should be marked thereon. Three vessels should be made of copper and karpara or (black jack?) Zinc blended metal. One vessel should be filled with sulphur-brimstone acid. Another should be filled with rookshaka bdellium acid, or croton seed acid? And manjishta or madder root acid should be filled in another vessel. The three vessels should be placed on the three kendra spots on the peetha.

In the sulphur acid vessel the prajwaalaka mani or flame producing crystal should be placed. In the rookshaka acid vessel the dhoomaasya mani or smoke crystal should be placed.

In the places in the vimaana where kitchens are located, and where sacred agnihotra fires are needed by passengers, keelaka sthambhas or pivots should be fixed. The acid vessels should be connected with power wires from the central pivot. These wires should be attached to the manis or crystals in the acid vessels. At the top of the central pole jwaalaamukhee mani should be fixed in the centre of chumbakee keela with glass-covering. On either side of it sinjeeraka mani and dridhikaa mani should be fixed. From each mani a wire should be stretched from the top of the central pole and fixed at the ganthikeela at the foot of the pole. From there up to the cooking spots and agnihotra spots, a circle should be formed like a kulya, and metal tubes should be fixed therein. Wire should be drawn through the tubes to the fire places and fixed to the kharpara metallic pattikas therein.

First the bhadramushti keelaka should be revolved. The acid in the vessel will become heated. The heat generated in the rookshna acid will pass into the manjishtha mani, and generate smoke in the mahoshnika mani. By the force of that acid intense heat will be generated. And by the heat

generated in the sulphuric acid vessel flames will erupt in the prajwaalaka mani. The smoke, heat and flames will pass through the wires to the sinjeeraka, dridhikaa and jwaalaa mukhee manis. Then the chumbaka wheel should be turned vigorously, whereupon the smoke, heat, and flames will reach the key at the top of the central pole. And on that keelee being turned, they will reach the central switchboard keelee at the foot of the pole. When that switch is put on, the heat and flames will reach the metal bands of the cooking ovens and religious fire places, and generate fires. Therefore vyshwaanara naala yantra should be fixed at the navel centre of the vimaana.

We have so far dealt with anga yantras or constituent machines of the vimaana. We proceed next to deal with Vyoma-yaanas or Aeroplanes.

And with that what is called Chapter Five ends and the final chapters on different types and categories of vimanas follow. We learn an interesting new name or derivation of vimanas: Vyomayaanas (or Vyoma-yanas is a more modern spelling). Perhaps the word "vyoma" is one that needs looking into.

Chapter Six begins with the statement from Maharishi Bharadwaja that there are three types of vimanas according to the changing of yugas, or world ages:

Having dealt with the constituent mechanical parts of the vimaana, we shall now deal with the vimaanas according to their different classes. The sootra [sutra] indicates that there are different types of planes, and that they are of three types.

In the Krita Yuga, Dharma or Righteousness was four-footed, that is, it was four-square, fully established, all paramount, and it was adhered to implicitly by men. The men were inherently noble-born and were

possessed of remarkable powers. Without needing to go through yogic discipline to attain special powers, or practice mantras which secured extraordinary results, the men of that yuga, merely by their devotion to dharma, became Siddh-purushaas or gifted with superhuman powers. They were virtuous men and men of learning and wisdom. Going in the sky with the speed of the wind by their own volition was natural to them. The eight super-sensory, and now superhuman, attainments, known as animaa, mahimaa, garimaa, laghimaa, praaptih, praakaamya, eeshatwa, and vashitwa, were all possessed by them. That is, animaa is assumption of infinitesimal shape; mahimaa is growing into gigantic shape; garimaa is becoming astonishingly heavy; laghimaa is becoming weightless; praaptih is securing any desired thing; praakaamyam is becoming rid of desires; eeshatwa is attaining paramountcy [sic]; and vashitwa is becoming extremely pliant.

The book goes on to list the four standard yugas, or world ages of Hindu tradition: Krita, Treta, Dwapara, and Kali. Like many Hindu scholars', Sastri's text goes for wildly lengthy periods for these yugas, over one million years each for the Krita and Treta yugas. Other Hindu sources, such as the Raja Yoga Society at Mount Abu in Rajastan say that the yuga cycles are more akin to the 24,000-year precession of the equinox cycle that would give each yuga cycle only around 6,000 years, placing the beginning of last Krita Yuga at about 26,000 years ago. Sastri's text rather implies the great time and numbers involved in many Hindu calculations which can seem impossibly vast: The Krita Yuga: 1,728,000 years (yes, 1.7 millionl); Treta Yuga: 1,296,000 years; Dwaapara Yuga: 864.000 years; Kali Yuga: 432,000 years.

So, for the last 432,000 years or so (we are coming to the end of this yuga soon, Hindu scholars assure us) we have been in the dark ages of the Kali

Yuga, which is a bad era, but the Krita Yuga that will follow it soon in cyclic succession will be a golden age. According to the *Vymanika Shastra* there were no vimanas in the first yuga, the Krita Yuga, because in that golden age men could fly on their own:

> Therefore in Krita Yuga, or first epoch, the ancients say, there were none of the three classes of vimaanas.
>
> Krita Yuga passed, and Tretaa Yuga commenced. Dharma then became limp of one foot. It served with three feet only, and grew gradually less efficient. So men's minds became dense, and the conception of Vedic truths, and anima and other super-sensory powers, became scarcer. Therefore, by the corrosion of Dharma or righteousness, men lost the power of flying in the sky with the speed of the wind.
>
> Perceiving this, God Mahadeva, desiring to confer the power of understanding the Vedas properly on the Dwijas, or brahmins, kshatriyas, and vysyas, graciously descended on earth in the form of Dakshinaamurthy, and through the instrumentality of Sanaka and other anointed sages, classified the Munis or ascetics, he blessed them with the gift of Vedic perception. And then to ensure that they were properly receptive, he embraced them and entered their hearts and illuminated their memories. The munis, overwhelmed by the Divine grace, aglow with horripulation [sic], with voice choked with emotion, praised the Supreme with shata-rudreeya and other hymns, and manifested profound devotion.
>
> Pleased with their receptiveness, divine Dakshinaamurthy, favoring them with a benign glance, and with smile on his face, said to them, "Till now you have been known as 'Munis' or ascetics. Henceforth, having by my grace attained insight into the Vedas, you shall be known as 'Rishis' or seers. You will cultivate the vedic mantras, and practice celibacy, you will adore the divine Goddess of the Vedas, and winning her favour, and

approaching the Great God Easwara by yogic Samadhi, ascertain His mind, and His and my grace, rising to the pinnacle of intellectual vision, become adepts in the meaning and purport of the Vedas; and confirming by them your own experiences and meditative introspection, you will create the Dharmashaastras or moral codes, Puranas and Itihaasas, and physical and material sciences, in conformity to the truths of the Vedas, for the benefit of mankind. And for traveling in the sky, propagate the art of manufacturing Vimaanas, and for attaining wind-speed, evolve Ghutica and Paadulaa methods through Kalpashaastras or scientific treatises."

Then those munis or seers, enshrining in their hearts God Mahadeva in the form of Dakshinaamurthy, produced the Dharmashaastras or ethical codes, epics, chronicles, manuals on rituals, treatises on the arts and sciences, ritualistic and sacrificial codes, in conformity to the Vedas, and propagated them among men. Amongst them it is said that there are six treatises bearing on the manufacture of Vimaanas produced by the ancient seers. In them are described three classes of vimaanas, known as maantrikaas, taantrikaas, and kritakaas, capable of flying everywhere.

It is said in Vimaana Chandrika, "I shall indicate the different kinds of vimaanas. In Tretaa yuga as men were adept in mantras or potent hymns, the vimaanas used to be produced by means of mantric knowledge. In Dwaapara yuga as men had developed considerable tantric knowledge, vimaanas were manufactured by means of tantric knowledge. As both mantra and tantra are deficient in Kali Yuga, the vimaanas are known as kritaka or articficial. Thus, owing to changes in dharma during the yugas, the ancient seers have classified the vimaanas of the three yugas as of three different types."

"Vyomayaana Tantra" also says, "By the influence of mantras in Tretaa, vimaanas are of maantrika type. Owing to the prevalence of tantras in Dwaapara [yuga], the vimaanas are of taantrika type. Owing to decadence

of both mantra and tantra in Kali Yuga, the vimaanas are of artificial type." Thus three classes of vimaanas are mentioned in shaastras by ancient seers.

In "Yantra Kalpa" also, "Vimaanas are classified into mantra and other varieties by experts according to differences in yugas. They are defined as maantrika, taantrika. and kritaka."

Sastri /Bharadwaja then goes on to reiterate that there are three types of vimanas and of the maantrika type there are 25 different models or varieties, starting with the pushpaka vimana:

Maantrika vimaanas in Tretaa yuga are 25. Their names are pushpaka, ajamukha, bhraajasvat, jyotimukha, kowshika, bheeshma, shesha, vajraanga, dyvata, ujvala, kolaahala, archisha, bhooshnu, somaanka, panchavarna, shanmukha, panchabaana, mayoora, shankara, tripura, vasuhaara, panchaanana, ambareesha, trinetra and bherunda.

In Maanibhadrakaarikaa, the vimaanas of Tretaa yuga are 32 of the maantrika type. Their names as given by Maharshi Gowtama are are pushpaka, ajamukha, bhraaja, swayamjyoti, kowshika, bheeshma, shesha, vajraanga, dyvata, ujvala, kolaahala, archisha, bhooshnu, somaanka, varnapanchaka, shanmukha, panchabaana, mayoora, shankara priya, tripura, vasuhaara, panchaanana, ambareesha, trinetra and bherunda, etc.

Sastri /Bharadwaja then goes on to say that there are 56 types of Taantrika vimanas which were used in the Dwaapara yuga:

In shape, movement and speed there is no difference between maantrika and taantrika vimaanas. There is however one difference in taantrika vimaanas, that is, the way in which the shakti or power at the junction of

sky and earth is incorporated.

Lalla also says, "There is only one difference between taantrika vimaanas and maantrika vimaanas: the adaption of the power of sky and earth. In shape and movement variations, they are identical. The taantrika vimaanas are of 56 varieties. ...Their names are bhyrava, nandaka, vatuka, virinchi, vynateya, bherunda, makaradwaja, shringaataka, ambareesha, sheshaasya, saimtuka, maatrika, bhraaja, paingala, tittibha, pramatha, bhoorshni, champaka, drownika, rukmapunkha, bhraamani, kakubha, kaalabhyrava, jambuka, garudaasya, gajaasya, vasudeva, shoorasena, veerabaahu, bhusundaka, gandaka, shukatunda, kumuda, krownchika, ajagara, panchadala, chumbaka, dundubhi, ambaraasya, mayoora, bheeru, nalikaa, kaamapaalu, gandarksha, paariyaatra, shakuntaka, ravimandana, vyaaghramukha, vishnuratha, souvarnika, mruda, dambholi, brihathkunja, mahaanta, etc.

He gives basically the same list again from a different source he calls the Maanibhadrakaarikaa and then in one last list of strange names tells us that there are 25 different types of vimanas in Kali Yuga:

In Kali Yuga, the kritaka or artificial vimaanas are said to be 25. Their names are given below as indicated by sage Gowtama: shakuna, sundara, rukmaka, mandala, vakratunda, bhadraka, ruchakal, viraajaka, bhaaskara, gajaavarta, powshkala, viranchika, nandaka, kumuda, mandara, hamsa, shukaasya, sowmyaka, krownchaka, padmaka, symhika, panchabaana, owryaayana, pushkara, and kodanda.

Sastri /Bharadwaja then goes on to say that all of these 25 different types of vimana should only be made of a special metal called Raajaloha, which apparently has different types. The book discusses metal alloys briefly and

then begins to describe the Shakuna vimana which has the following parts:

> Peetha or floor board; hollow mast; three wheeled keelakas with holes; 4 heaters, air-suction pipes, water-jacket, oil tank, air heater, chhullee or heater, steam boiler, vidyud-yantra or electric generator, air propelling yantra, vaatapaa yantra or air-suction pipe, dikpradarsha dhwaja or direction indicating banner, shakuna yantra, two wings, tail portion for helping vimaana to rise, owshmyaka yantra or engine, kiranaakarshana mani or sun-ray attracting bead. These 28 are parts of Shakuna vimaana.

The book then goes on to discuss the construction, including placing a floorboard and a mast or pole in the center of the craft. Wheels are then discussed and an interesting dome window that is 15-1/2 feet in circumference with an inside measurement of five feet wide and two feet high. This dome is crowned by a "sun crystal" which is "7 feet round, and two feet wide and two feet in height." The Shakuna vimana has three floors and there are partitioning boxes for passengers and compartments for machines. It is a winged craft and sort of reminds the reader of a winged, flying boat:

> Beneath the ground-floor board a 7 feet high cellar should be constructed. In it the several necessary yantras should be located. In the centre is the foot of the hollow mast. On the four directions from it four air pumping machines should be fixed. In order to stimulate them four steam engines also should be installed. On the two sides of the vimaana two air expelling machines, and an air heater machine, and two machines to keep the heater supplied with air from outside, should be erected.
>
> In order to enable the wings on either side to spread and flap, proper hinges and keys should be provided for, safely fixing them to the sides of the vimaana, and for enabling them to fold and open easily.

The revolving tractor blades in the front should be duly fixed to the heating engine with rods so that they could dispel the wind in front and facilitate the passage of the vimaana.

The wings are two, one on each side, very strongly fixed to the vimaana with bolts and hinges. Each wing should be fixed in a one and a half foot scabbard up to 20 feet in length, where it would be 10 feet wide, widening futher up to 40 feet at the end of its 60 feet length, besides its first 20 feet of scabbard length.

The tail should be 20 feet long, and three and a half feet wide at the start, and 20 feet at the end.

After some discussion of the air-blower and heater somehow used in the Shakuna vimana—but how this makes the craft fly eludes the reader—this section ends and the book begins a description of the Sundara vimana which has eight parts. It is described as being round and 100 feet in circumference, and it is powered by a one-foot-tall crystal:

To conduct electricity, two wires should be passed through the pipe and fixed to the crystal. In the middle of the naalastambha or mast, for the smoke fumes to be restrained or speeded out, triple wheels with holes should be fixed. In order to work the wheels from outside, two right turning and left turning wheels should be attached outside the pole, and connected to the wheels inside. Three wires should be drawn inside the naala and fixed at the foot.

The book goes on to discuss heaters, oil vessels, fumes and a special cloth for making a hose. The section on the Sundara vimana then says:

In order to protect against the intense heat from fire and sun inside and

outside the vimaana, it should be provided a covering made of the 6th type of Ooshmapaa loha or heat-proof metal. At the top and bottom and on the sides keys should be provided for the movement of the fumes. Forty such dhoomodgama yantras should be properly fixed in the selected spots of the peetha with screw fittings. The vimaana will be enabled to fly smoothly by so doing.

The chapter on the Sundara vimana continues with a lengthy section on electric dynamos, of which there are 32 kinds of "yantras for generating electricity." One that is described is a pot or vessel that has such things as elephant urine and mercury in it, as well a sun-crystal. Somehow this mixture creates and stores electricity. Another electricity storage device that includes large metal plates is described, as well as the following device:

In order to store this power in the storage vessel six-inches long steel tubes should connect the bottom of the vessel with the storage vessel. They should be covered by deerskin and wound round with silk cloth or yarn. Two copper wires should be passed through the tubes and connected to the storage vessel. One hundred palas of mercury should be put in the vessel. And a 391th type [sic] of sun crystal duly wired should be placed in the mercury, and the wires coming from the tubes should be connected to it.

The well-oiled keys in the four vessels should be revolved with speed to 200 degrees heat, when the liquids in the vessels will be boiled by the heat rays. Then the keys should be hastened up to 2000 degrees. By the liquids in each vessel 800 linkas of electricity will be generated. The power should be conveyed by the wires in the kaanta metal tubes to the storage vessel. The crystal will absorb and fill the vessel with the power. In front of the storage vessel a five feet long, three feet high circular vessel

should be installed. It should be covered all round with bark of vaari-vriksha.

Always water will be flowing in it. So instead of water, water skin is indicated. It will give the vessel the effect of water-immersion. Then in that vessel glass cups containing the decoction of shikhaavalee... Then power should be drawn from the storage vessel through the wires inside the glass-covered tube, and four wires with glass wheel key be let into the acid vessels. Then from the bottom of the vessels two wires fitted with keys should be taken in a right circle to the front of the smoke-outlet stambha or pipe, and attached to the wires inside the bhujyu metal tube. The wires should also be connected to the keys of the electric friction crystals in the dhoomodgama stambha or pillar, as also to the key in the stambha. Thereby electricity will be spread in all parts of the vimaana. Therefore the vidyud-yantra or electrical machine should be installed in the left side of the vimaana.

The book goes on to discuss an air spreading machine which helps the vimana fly and other devices such as a bellows mouth mechanism and various containers for water, oils and fuels. After mentioning that through "air, smoke, and heat of the yantras below [the floor], the ascent and flight of the vimaana will facilitated," and stating that the range of flight is about 3,600 miles, the chapter concludes:

This is Sundara Vimaana, and it has been described after consulting ancient works, and according to my humble capacity, says Maharshi Bharadwaaja.

The next chapter is a shorter one on the Rukma vimana which, it is explained, is golden in color, "rukma" means gold which is why this vehicle

has this name. The Rukma vimana is something of a round, discoid craft with a pole in the center that peaks at the dome or conical top. The pictures that were drawn of the Rukma vimana from the *Vimanika Shastra* text make it look a bit like a pointed Hindu temple and in some ways, something like a rocket. The poles in the craft are used to conduct electricity:

> One foot wide and four feet high poles should be fixed. They should have switches wired up to the electric pole. Eight inches wide wheels should be fixed in the middle of the pole, on either side, with wires. From the electric pole chain wires should enclose the wheels and be fixed in another pole with inside hinges. On the top of the poles should be fixed goblet shaped cups with button-switches like half-blooms with wheels and keys, so that on pressing the button with the thumb the wheels in the other pole will revolve from electric contact. Then the wheels in the electric pole will also revolve, producing 5000 linkas of speed.
>
> Flying: Due to this electrical force, the ayahpinda wheels beneath the peetha will beat against it and make it rise and move upwards. And by moving the switches of the wheeled poles above the peetha, the poles will revolve with speed, and accelerate the speed of the vimaana. By the concussion of the wheels underneath, and the action of the poles above, the vimaana will move upwards and gain height and fly with dignity.

The Rukma vimana by T.K. Ellappa.

... Having dealt with the mechanism for setting the vimaana in motion we now consider the mechanism for giving direction to the vimaana in its course. In the 8 diks or directions of the peetha, pillars made of mica and shining like panchakantha, two feet thick and 15 feet high should be fixed at intervals of 10 feet. On the pillars should be built the passenger seating arrangements, and booths or locations for the machinery, as in the case of the Sundara Vimaana. The pillars should be made of mica only.

... Lallaacharya says: In order to make the vimaana change its course from one path to another or one direction to another, revolving keelakas should be fixed on the eight sides of the vimaana. Two keelakas should be fitted together.

By operating it, the vimaana could be made to change its course one way or another...

This interesting section concludes what the *Vimanika Shastra* text has to say about the Rukma vimana. The revolving keelakas that are to fixed along the side of the circular, disc-shaped craft, sound something like gyros that are spaced evenly around the edge of the disc; by tilting them, they could be used to steer the craft, in theory. That some discoid craft are basically flying

gyros that are steered by smaller gyros surrounding a larger central gyro that provides the main lift makes sense to me. The mercury-gyro concepts for craft propulsion are along this same line and will be discussed at more length in a later chapter.

The chapter of the *Vimanika Shastra* which is about the Tripura vimana. The chapter starts out with Bharadwaja announcing this final chapter and saying that the motive power of this vimana is from solar rays. However, this power may be more like vril power as the Tripura vimana can go underwater (or at least part of it can):

> The vimaana which naturally can travel on land, sea, and in the sky by alteration of its structure is called Tripura Vimana.
>
> It has got three parts. The first part can travel on land. The second part can travel under and over water. The third part travels in the sky. By uniting the three parts by means of keelakas, the plane can be made to travel in the sky. The plane is divisible into three parts so that it might travel on land, sea, or air. The construction of the first part in now explained. Tripura vimaana should be made out of Trinetra metal only.

The chapter goes on at length about the boat-like structure, power generator with pipes and wires and then a curious section on the use of mica, including powered mica, in the construction of the vimana. There are compartments for passengers and the whole craft seems to be a long, cigar-shaped ship that is also similar to a submarine. There are three floors, or decks, on the craft and it seems that the whole vimana is constructed of metal, including the decks between floors. Each floor is described in the lengthy chapter as having enclosing walls half a foot thick in rooms seven feet high. Like all the vimanas described, the Tripura vimana has poles in it that are part of the electrical generation system. Then a strange machine

called a Ganapa-yantra is described:

> The Ganapa-yantra is a machine shaped like Vighneshwara [Ganesh, the elephant-headed god], one foot broad and three feet high. From its head a tubular projection like elephant's trunk, covered with glass and with wires inside should be fixed at the front of the cradle, and connect to the Ganapa image from the neck to the navel. Three-inch toothed wheels should be so fixed that a big wheel at the neck of the image, by force of the current coming through the trunk or proboscis will whirl, setting the other wheels in motion. A coil of wire should be placed in the centre. On it a saptashashthi shankha or conch called simhikaa should be placed, with covering made of kravyaada metal.

The final pages of the chapter are about the wheels, which are electrically controlled and help move the long, submarine-like object on the ground when it is on land, plus brief descriptions of the electrical system which contains references to acids and crystals. Says the last paragraph of the book:

> The Simhika shankha on the top of the motor contains an acid and the bhaamukha-graahinee mani or crystal. Five rods with amshupaamitra manis are fitted to the top of the shankha, and toothed wheels are fitted to these rods to revolve together and rub against the inner surface of amshupaa mirror at the top. The solar power absorbed by the mirror is stored in the shankha, and given out by the bhaamukha graahinee mani to the various motors in the vimaana.
>
> Thus concludes the description of Tripura Vimaana. And that brings us to the end of the wonder manuscript left behind for the edification of mankind by the venerable mystic Anekal Subraaya Sastri whose occult

powers visualized this much from the *Vimanika Shastra* section of the giant "Encyclopedia of Machines" or "Yantra Sarvasva" of divine sage Maharshi Bharadwaja.

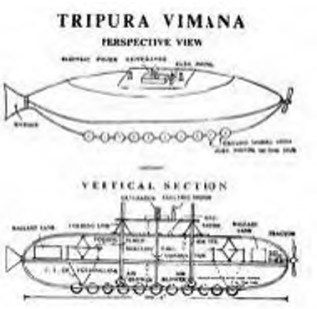
A number of illustrations complete the 1972 edition, starting with a drawing of the Rukma vimana. It, like most of the drawings, were created in February of 1923 by T.K. Ellappa in Bangalore, and it does seem that these drawings are influenced by the technology of the time. The Rukma vimana appears to be a conical-discoid object with electric power and two propellers (of three) visible on the bottom. These aren't really described in the text, but it seems the artist wanted to include them anyway. This was decades before the whirling-spinning world of flying saucers entered popular conciousness.

So what are we to think about the *Vimanika Shastra* text? Was it just the imaginings of a Hindu scholar who knew his ancient texts and scholars very well? It seems to me that there was once a book called the *Vimanika Shastra* that did exist, and is part of Maharishi Bharadwaja's epic encyclopedia "All About Machines" or "Yantra Sarvasva."

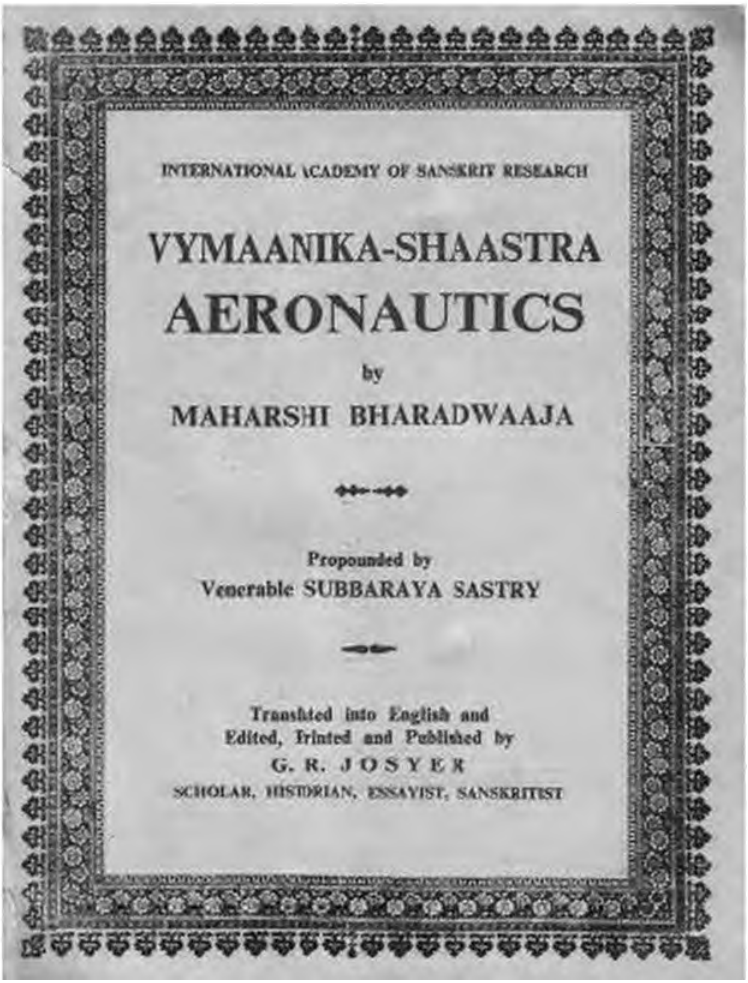
So, did Sastri somehow obtain a rare copy, or fragments of one, in the Royal Baroda Library in 1908, as Kanjilal suggests? What seems clear is that Anekal Subraaya Sastri was some sort of a genius who did indeed have or have access to many ancient Hindu and Jain texts—Buddhist as well—that allowed him to quote from a wide variety of established authorities from ancient times. Just as we know many "lost" Greek philosophers and books from mentions of them in other books that have survived the constant destruction of libraries over time, the many books written in ancient India quote other books and scholars who may be otherwise lost. Sastri has quoted them, often in rather questionable detail. But ultimately it is the ancient scholar—some might say even mythical figure— Maharishi Bharadwaja who is quoting the many others scholars named in the book. Sastri would

have had to have been familiar with these many scholars named by Bharadwaja even if he did not have an original manuscript that had been preserved for many hundreds of years in the Royal Baroda Library. He was certainly a devotee of Maharishi Bharadwaja and it seems that Sastri believed he was in some sort dialogue with the ancient Master.

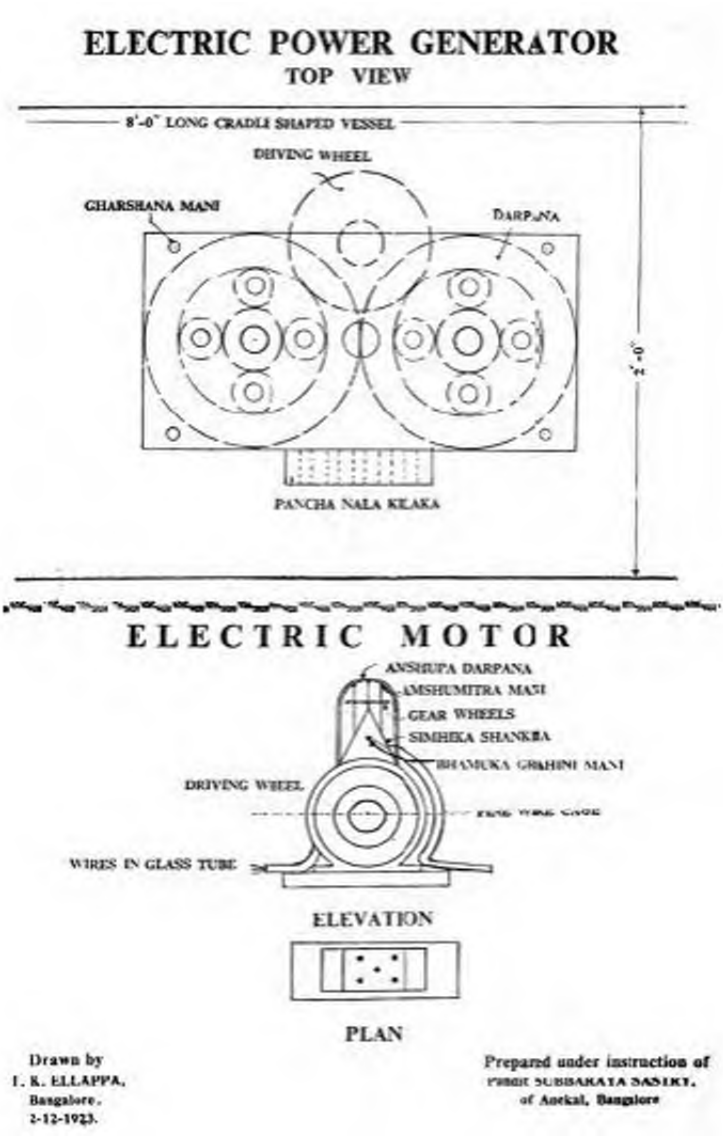
So, did Subraaya Sastri actually have a copy of the *Vimanika Shastra* text? We may never know just how much of the *Vimanika Shastra* text was imagined by Sastri, but some of it must be his actual interpretation. What would be the point of spending five years simply conjuring up an extremely technical, detailed account of the construction and use of ancient flying machines? Why would a sage such as Sastri think this was a reliable use of time, or something that would "benefit mankind"? There must have more to his effort than that.



Ancient manuscripts mentioning vimanas do indeed exist as we have seen. Valmiki's *Ramayana* is one of the most popular stories in the world today and vimanas are featured heavily in the tale. The *Vimanika Shastra* is a fascinating book, whoever wrote it. It is part of our quest for knowledge of vimanas and associated subjects, but it is only a small piece of the puzzle, and at least shows that interest in vimanas knows no bounds!

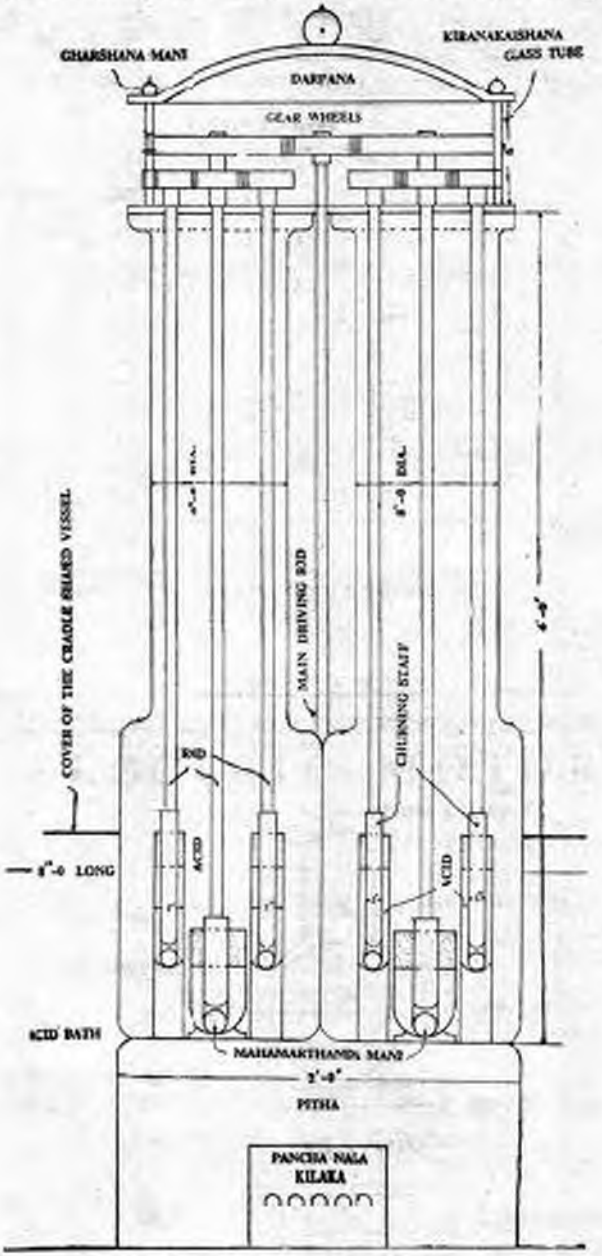


The title page from Josyer's 1972 English edition of the *Vimanika Shastra*.



Drawings done in 1923 by T.K. Ellappa.

ELECTRIC POWER GENERATOR

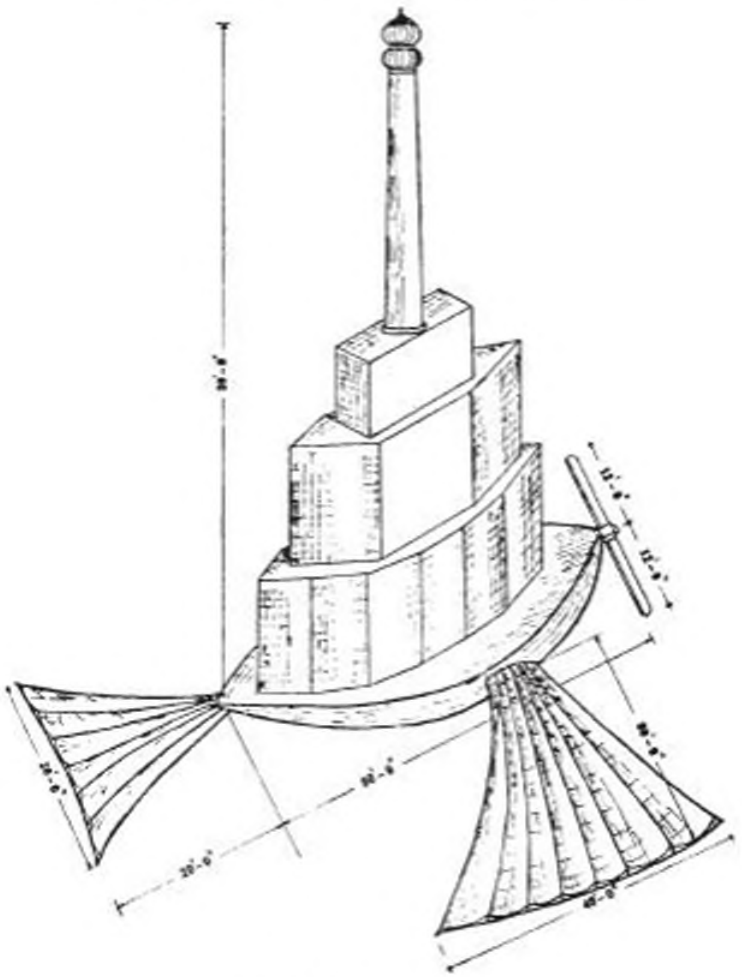


SECTIONAL ELEVATION

Drawn by
T. K. ELLAPPA,
Bangalore.

Prepared under instruction of
Pandit SUBBARAYA SASTRY,
of Anekal, Bangalore

SHAKUNA VIMANA

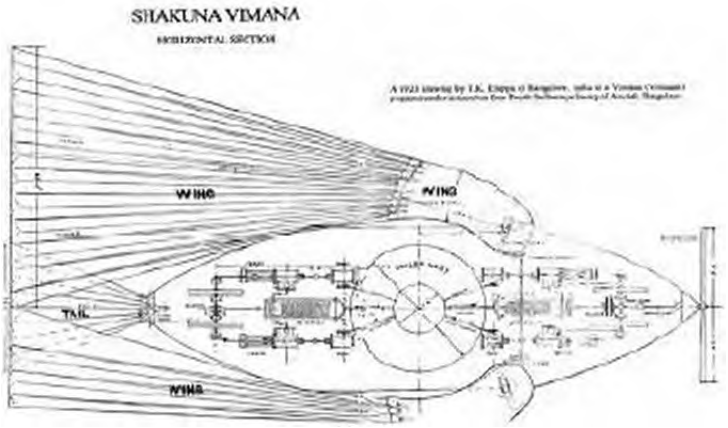


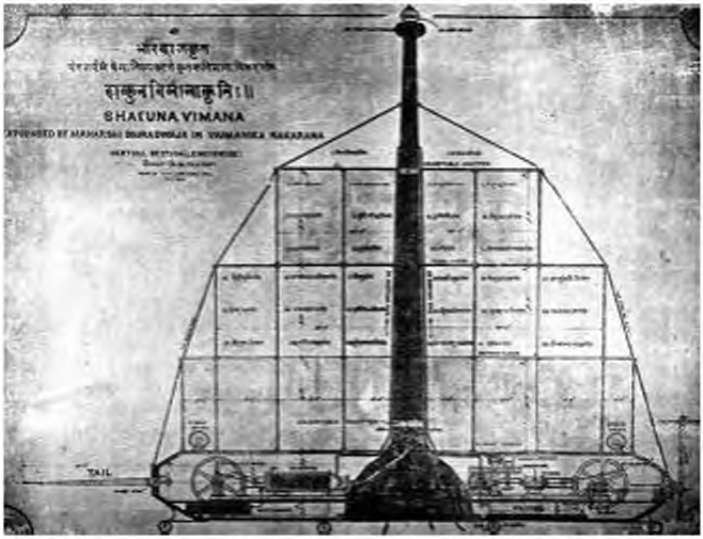
PERSPECTIVE VIEW

Drawn by
T. K. ELLAPPA,
Bangalore.
2-12-1923.

Prepared under instruction of
Pandit SUBBARAYA SASTRY,
of Anekal, Bangalore.

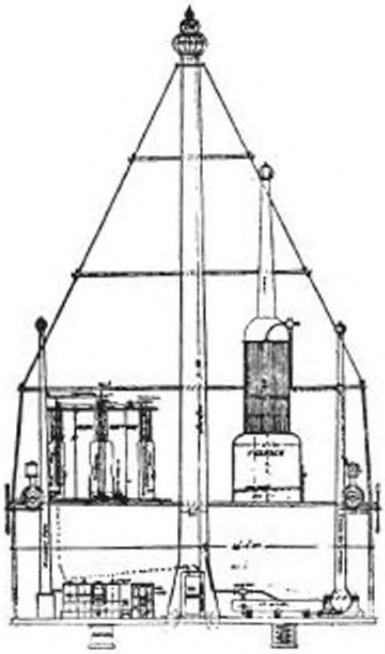
Drawings done in 1923 by T.K. Ellappa.





Drawings done in 1923 by T.K. Ellappa of the Shakuna vimana.

SUNDARA VIMANA



VERTICAL SECTION

Drawn by
T. K. ELLAPPA,
Bangalore.
2-12-1923.

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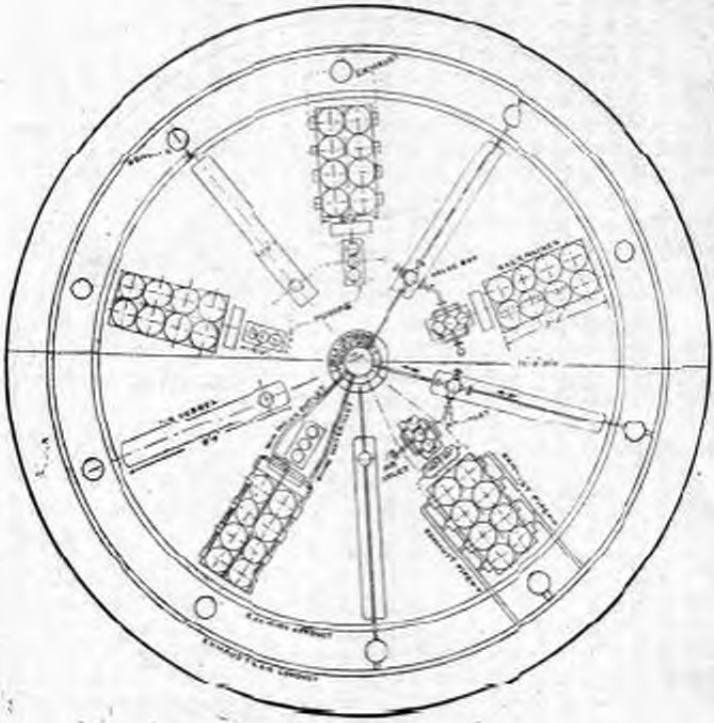
Pandit SUBBARAYA SASTRY,
of Anekal, Bangalore

Drawings done in 1923 by T.K. Ellappa.

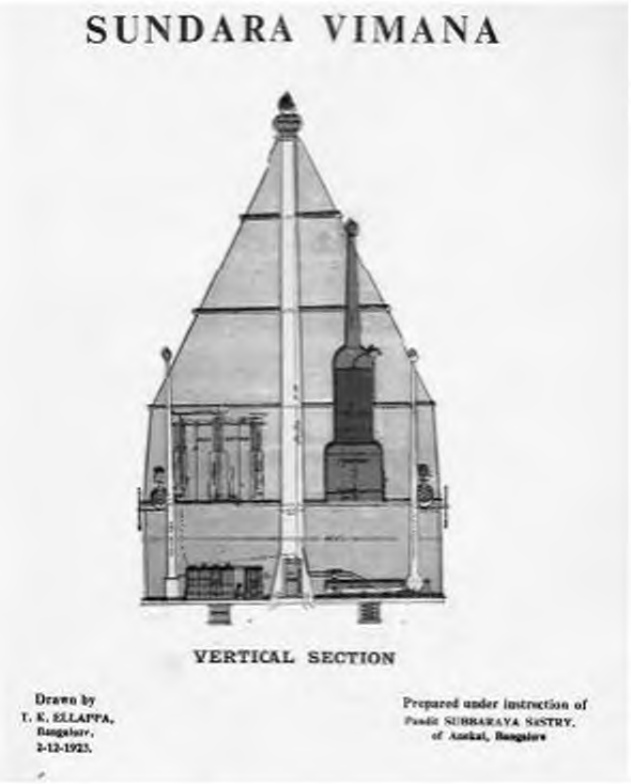
SUNDARA VIMANA



PLAN OF PITHA (BASE)

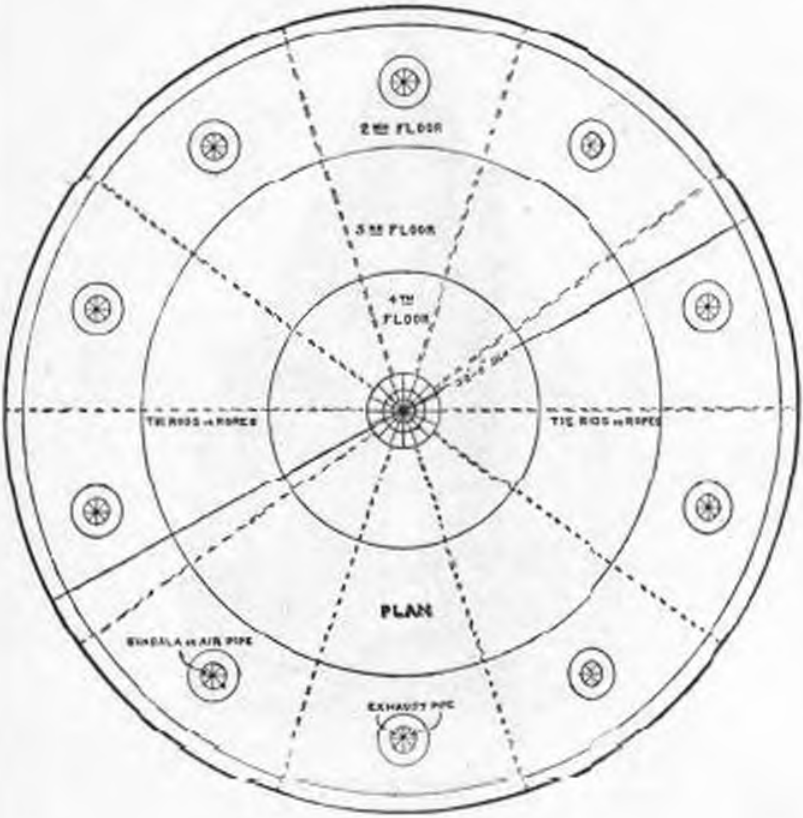
Drawn by
T. K. ELLAPPA,
Bangalore.
2-12-1923.

Prepared under instruction of
Pandit SUBBARAYA SASTRY,
of Anekal, Bangalore



Drawings done in 1923 by T.K. Ellappa.

SUNDARA VIMANA



FLOORS

Drawn by
T. K. ELLAPPA,
Bangalore.
2-12-1923.

Prepared under instruction of
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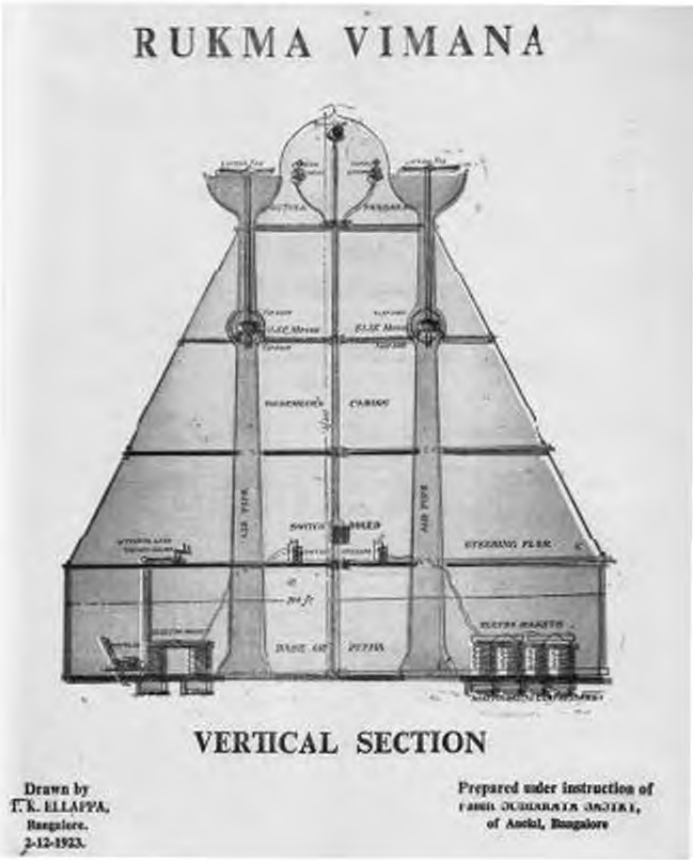
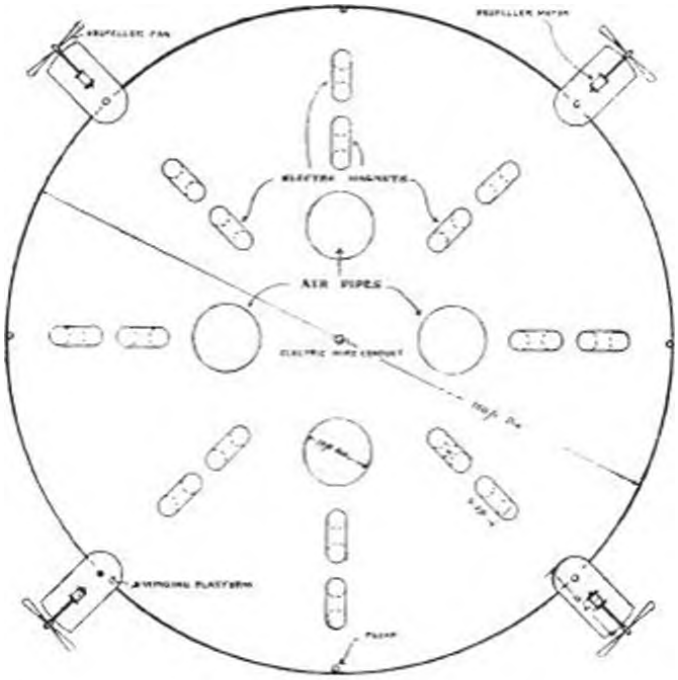
of Anekal, Bangalore.



Drawings done in 1923 by T.K. Ellappa.

RUKMA VIMANA



PLAN OF BASE OR PITHA

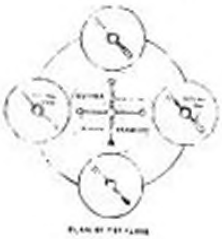
Drawn by
T. K. ELLAPPA.
Bangalore
2-12-1923.

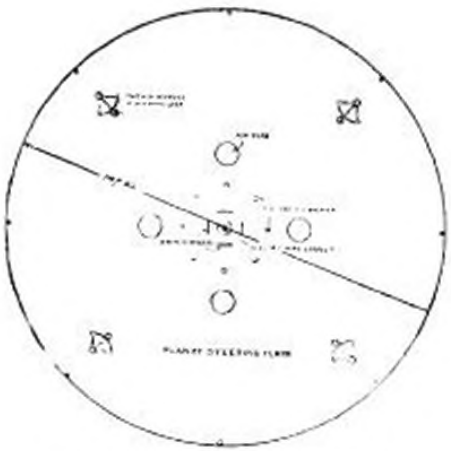
Prepared under instructions of
Pandit SUBBARAYA SASTRY,
of Anekal, Bangalore.

Drawings done in 1923 by T.K. Ellappa

RUKMA VIMANA

Plan of Top Floor





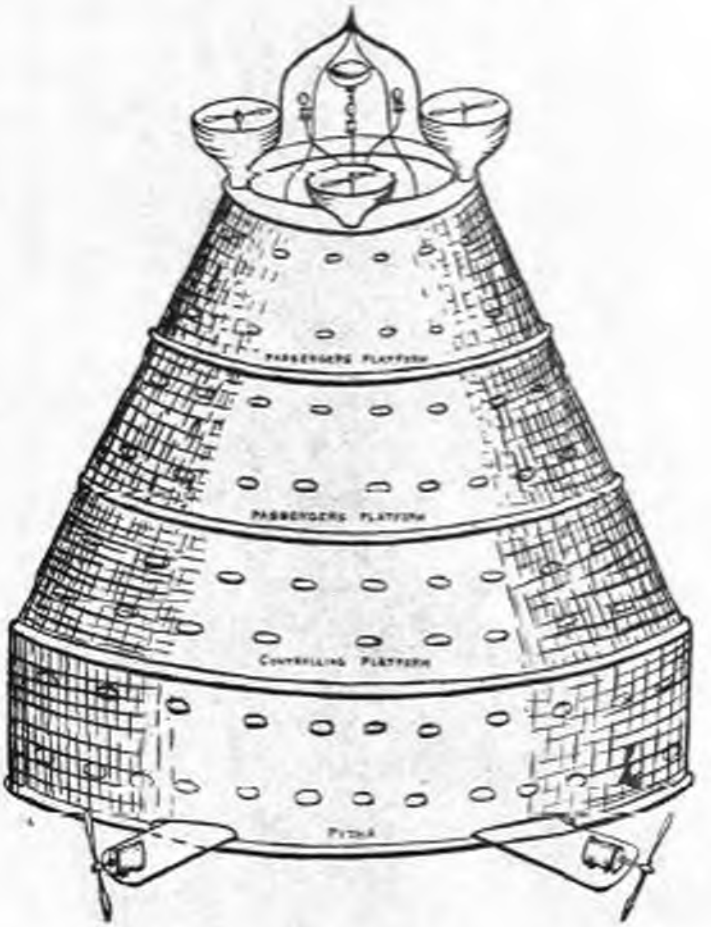
PLAN OF STEERING FLOOR

Drawn by
T. K. ELLAPPA.
Bangalore.
2-12-1923.

Prepared under instruction of
Pandit SUBBARAYA SASTRY,
of Anekal, Bangalore.

Drawings done in 1923 by T.K. Ellappa.

RUKMA VIMANA



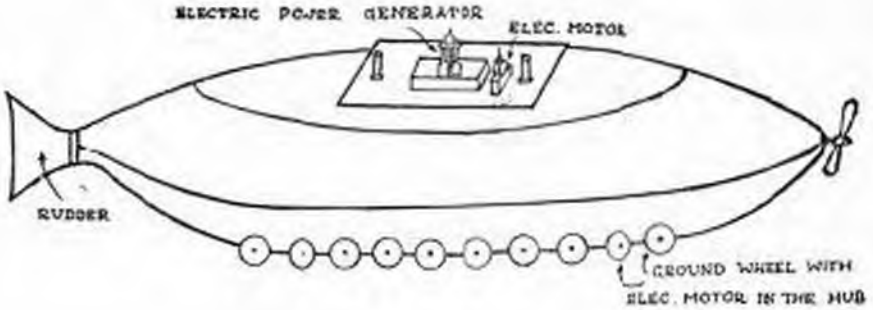
PROFILE

Drawn by
T K. ELLAPPA.
Bangalore.
2-12-1923.

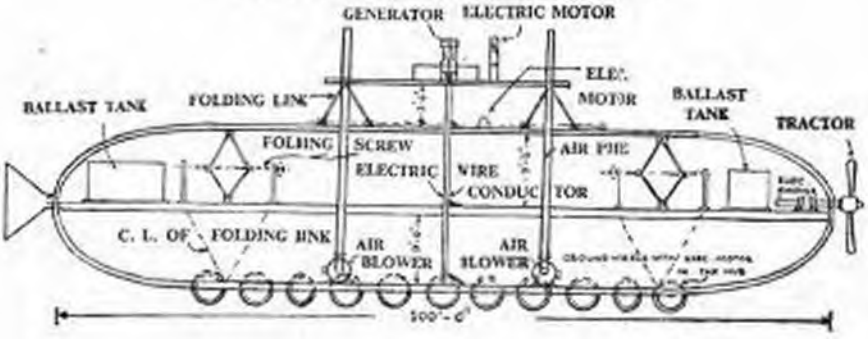
Prepared under instruction of
Pandit SUBBARAVA SASTRY.
of Anekal, Bangalore.

TRIPURA VIMANA

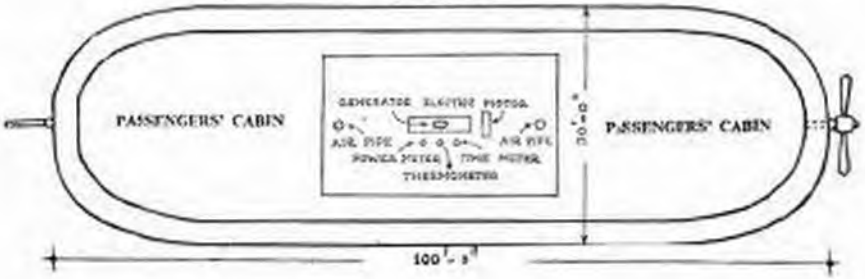
PERSPECTIVE VIEW

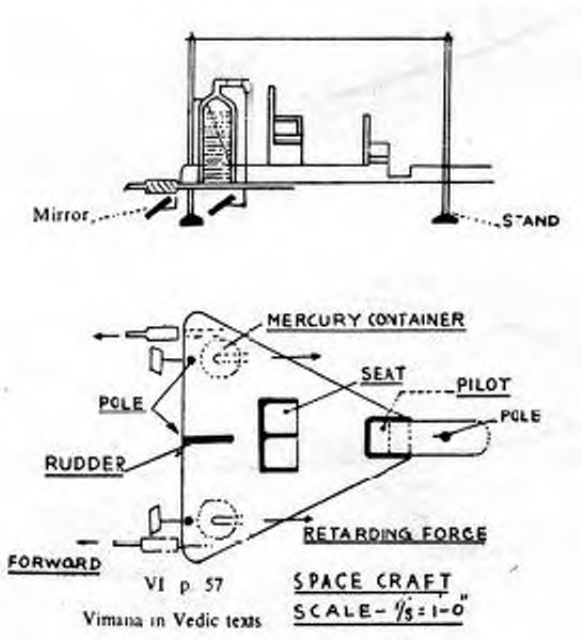


VERTICAL SECTION



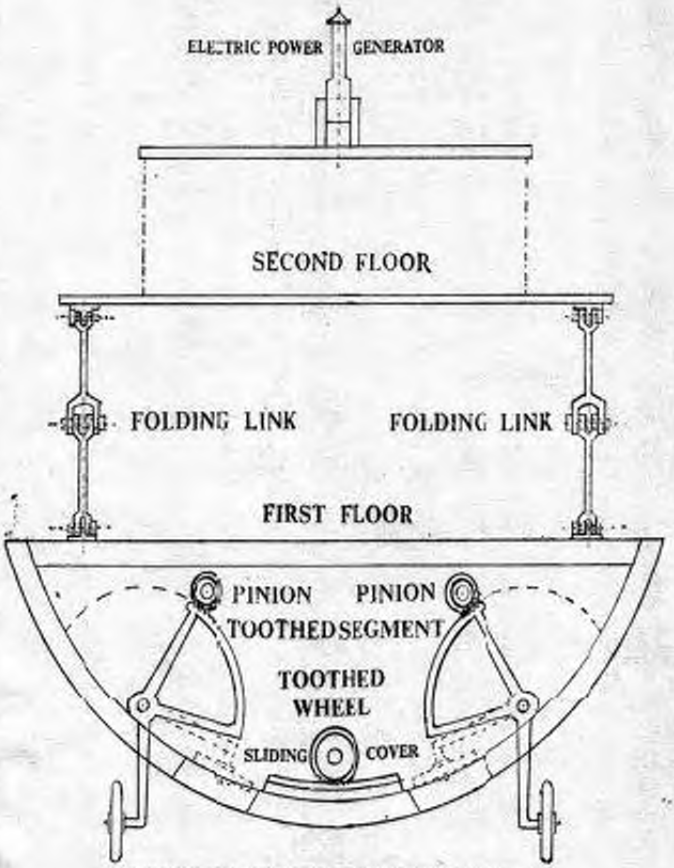
PLAN





Drawing from Dileep Kanjilal's book *Vimana in Ancient India* of the craft and mecury engines as they are described in the *Vimanika Shastra*.

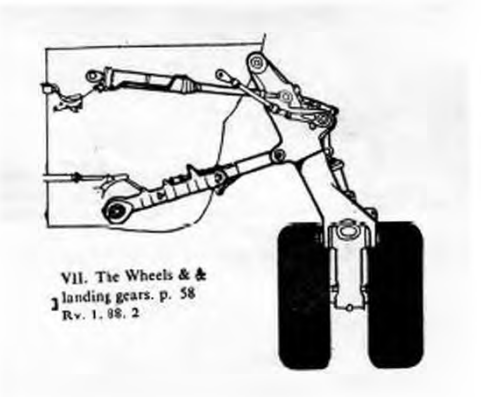
TRIPURA VIMANA



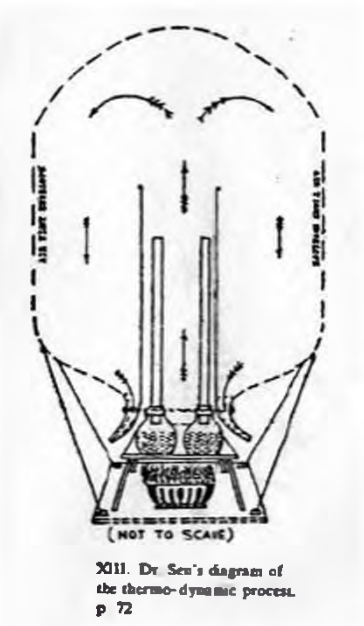
CROSS SECTION

Drawn by
T. K. ELLAPPA,
Bangalore.
2-12-1923.

Prepared under instruction of
Pandit SUBBARAYA SASTRY,
of Anekal, Bangalore



Drawing from Dileep Kanjilal's book *Vimana in Ancient India* of the landing gear described in the *Vimanika Shastra*.



Drawing from Dileep Kanjilal's book *Vimana in Ancient India* of the mercury

engine concept in the *Vimanika Shastra*.

CHAPTER SIX

MASTERS, MEGALITHS AND MACHINES

Believe me, that was a happy age, Before the days of architects, Before the days of Builders.

— Seneca, *Epistle* 90 (c. 64 AD)

Everything we call real is made of things that cannot be regarded as real. If Quantum Mechanics hasn't profoundly shocked you, you haven't understood it yet!

—Niels Bohr, 1960

They are masters. They build megalithic monuments. They fly through the air. They understand metals and machines. They can anticipate what you are going to do before you do it. They are the ancients. They were the immortals of ancient Chinese legends and the rishis of ancient India. In India they typically became gods, in the way that Rama is now a god, while in China they were the "masters" who were quiet and understood the ways of the Tao. Perhaps Tiwanaku was one of their cities, complete with molten metals, until it was destroyed in a cataclysm thousands of years ago.

The rishis lived in the Himalayas and southern Tibet while the Chinese immortals like Kuan Yin were at a secret mountain fortress in northern Tibet. They understood meditation and the importance of good works. They also understood technology, yantras and mandalas. As mentioned earlier, in ancient India the Sanskrit word for "instrument" or "machine" was yantra.

As noted previously, a popular form of the yantra is as geometrical figure, but other yantras are devices that have moving parts, complicated materials (often very special) and even electricity as part of their working order. These

yantra-machines can be large buildings or bridges, or the workings of a great cart—like the famous Juggernaut of Orissa (now Odisha as of 2011)) that has been paraded once a year for thousands of years—or even the working parts of vimanas. Fantastic works of stone—like Baalbek in Lebanon, those in Egypt, Peru and elsewhere—can also be yantras. Creating fantastic works of stone can mean cutting, dressing and moving solid rock or fashioning specially cut caverns.

Such hidden caverns complete with ancient machines and masters was featured in one of the most popular movie serials of all time, *The Adventures of Captain Marvel*. This 1941 serial comprised 12 episodes of exciting and mystical adventure based on secret Masters in Tibet, who had given special powers to a young American man who is transformed into the amazing Captain Marvel. Early on in the serial we are introduced to one of the ancient Masters in a secret cave in Tibet.

While *The Adventures of Captain Marvel* are fictional stories, there are a number of other stories that detail unusual finds in caves in Tibet. Odd-ball artifacts, crystal skulls, vimana parts, mummified yeti hands—all have been said to have been found in monasteries or reliquaries in Tibet. One of the most famous stories is about the mysterious Dropa Disks.

Stone Disks and the Dropa of Tibet

In my quest for evidence of vimanas and ancient flight I have come across a number of interesting tales in books, documentaries and on the Internet. Many of these stories are about parts of vimanas—or even entire craft—discovered somewhere in Tibet, China, India or Afghanistan. Other tales might concern Mount Shasta in California or the remotest parts of the Andes Mountains in South America. Separating fact from fiction in some of these stories can be difficult. Let us start with the tales of the Dropa, a people supposedly from a remote valley in eastern Tibet.

The general story of the Dropa (or Dzopa in some accounts) is that of a "Chinese Roswell" in which extraterrestrials crashed their spaceship in western China/eastern Tibet 12,000 years ago and created a diminutive race of half-alien/half-human hybrids. The aliens were known as the Dropa and the half-aliens were also called by that name.

The evidence for the Dropa, according to German tour guide and author Hartwig Hausdorf, was found by a Chinese archeologist named Chi Pu Tei who led an expedition in 1937-38 for the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which was said to be located in Peking. Chi Pu Tei and his team were in the Kunlun-Kette mountain range, which runs along the northern border of western Tibet and is a quite remote and uninhabited area. The team needed to find a shelter, so entered a mountain cave.

Inside this cave they found walls that were covered with inscriptions, and at the back of the cave sarcophagi aligned in a row and small skeletons. These skeletons were about four feet tall (1.2 meters) and had large heads, similar to a dwarf or possibly a gray alien skeleton.

Also discovered in the cave were hundreds of stone disks, a total 716 in all (supposedly), and each disk bore some sort of hieroglyphic writing on it. Each disk was about 30 cm wide and had a hole in the center, like a music record of some sort.

Hausdorf says in his 1998 book *The Chinese Roswell*[98] that professor Chi Pu Tei tried to get the story published in the academic journal of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (presumably in the 1950s). The academy refused to publish the paper, literally banning it from the journal (which may or may not have existed). But the story got out in the early 1960s when another Chinese professor named Tsum Um Nui of the Peking Academy of Prehistory supposedly claimed that he had deciphered the stone disks found in 1937-38 (presumably not all 716 of them!) and said that they describe the crash of an extraterrestrial spacecraft 12,000 years ago. One of the disks said, according

to Dr. Tsum Um Nui's translation:

> The Dropa came out of the clouds in their aeroplanes. Before sunrise, our men, women and children hid in the caves ten times. When they finally understood the sign language of the Dropa, they realised the newcomers had peaceful intentions...

And thus we have a rather vague story that seems to confirm sky-aliens landing in Tibet and leaving evidence of their space travels in a cave thousands of years ago—an amazing story if it is true! Hausdorf says that this story can be traced to 1962, and that Berlin-based historian Dr. Jörg Dendl was able to find a first mention of the Dropa story in a monthly magazine for vegetarians, *Das vegetarische Universum (The Vegetarian Universe)*. This magazine published the story in an article titled "UFOs in Prehistory?" in its July, 1962 edition. Hausdorf says that Dr. Dendl was not able to find the original Chinese or Japanese source. Indeed, it seems that the earliest version of this story appeared in the Soviet magazine called *Russian Digest* sometime in the early 1960s, perhaps 1962. This story, apparently based on a Chinese article, was about a cave in which skeletons and stone disks had been discovered, and included speculation that they might have been extraterrestrial. Soviet magazines of the time were promoting space exploration and the search for extraterrestrial life. Stone disks, particularly jade stone disks, known as Bi, are sometimes found in ancient Chinese burials. The function of these disks is unknown to Chinese scholars, and even their manufacture is mysterious, as we shall see.

This Soviet article seems to have been the basis for the German article of 1962. It may have appeared in English and been available to a British audience in the English language edition of *Russian Digest* which was available for free at Soviet Union reading rooms throughout the world, run by the

USSR embassy in host countries. This article also apparently mentioned the name "Dropa," and began a long-lasting legacy of the Dropa in "ancient alien" lore and on the Internet. In 1973 a French science fiction novel by a writer named Daniel Piret entitled *Les disques de Biem-Kara (The Discs of Biem-Kara)* appeared. This novel may have been taken from the *Russian Digest* story as it concerned the discovery of mysterious disks with hieroglyphics on them in a fictitious mountain range in Tibet called Biem-Kara. The cover of this book (it was apparently never published in English) shows curious "alien" disks inside a cave, and snowy Tibetan mountains outside of the cave entrance. The aliens in the story are not called the Dropa, however.

The Strange Case of Exiled Sungods

Probably the main thing that has kept the story of the Dropa and their odd disks alive is the 1978 book *Sungods in Exile* published as a hardback by Neville Spearman in the UK, to the delight of readers of the occult and ancient astronaut enthusiasts. Indeed, ancient astronaut fever was sweeping the world at the time, and books by Erich von Daniken, Robert Charroux and Charles Berlitz sold millions of copies. While the book *Sungods in Exile* made very little impact at the time it was published, it has spawned a whole new mythos about Tibet and ancient astronauts, as well as given rise to rock bands and websites.

The book contains three rather convincing black and white photos on a page of glossy paper inserted into the center of the volume, but it has and no other photos, maps or other illustrations. I have several copies of the book, having picked them up in used bookstores in London in the 1980s and 90s; the copies are rather slim for a hardback book (only 150 pages), and there is no index, which is disappointing.

The book is subtitled "The Secrets of the Dzopa of Tibet" and the cover

says it is by Karyl Robin-Evans who is supposed to be an Oxford scholar. The book is copyrighted in the year 1978 by David Agamon. Although the book is now said to be fiction, at no point in the book does it say this. Rather we are informed in the Editor's Foreword that Karyl Robin-Evans died in 1974 and left his notes to David Agamon, asking him to try to get them published, which he was now successful in doing.

It has a special note on page 10 regarding spelling and pronunciation:

> Dropa is more correctly spelled as Dzopa, or perhaps Tsopa, though that does not quite correctly represent the sound either, the tongue needing to be positioned slightly highter in the mouth than it is for a z sound in English. Although Dropa is the better-known spelling of their name, it seems best to use Dzopa throughout, as being more nearly accurate.

The tale related in the book is of the supposed journey made by Karyl Robin-Evans to Tibet, during which he discovered the descendants of the Dzopa, plus sees their stone disks and photographs them. Robin-Evans makes his way to India in 1947 and then on to Tibet where in Lhasa he is able to meet briefly with the 14th Dalai Lama (who would have been a young boy).

From there he continues on to an almost inaccessible region of eastern Tibet, the dreaded Baian-Kara-Ula, a mountain range that does appear on old maps, researchers maintain. Robin-Evans is then abandoned by his Tibetan carriers who are afraid of the Baian-Kara-Ula area.

In the rather dull book, Robin-Evans reaches the Baian-Kara-Ula area nevertheless, and he meets the short-statured people there whom he calls the Dzopa. Robin-Evans lives with the Dzopa for some time and through the help of a language-teacher he learns their tongue. He is befriended by a couple named Hueypah-la and Veez-la (who is only 3 feet 7 inches tall) who

introduce him to other people of the valley. The first of the three photos in the book is a blurry picture of a Tibetan couple, the woman wearing a large headdress. The caption says that they are Hueypah-la and Veez-la.

The book says that Robin-Evans then was introduced to an elder of the Dzopa named Lurgan-la, their religious guardian. Lurgan-La taught him that the people originally came from a planet in the Sirius system. About 12,000 years ago they undertook an exploration mission to earth. Their ship crashed and those survivors among them were then unable to leave Earth.

Robin-Evans is also shown a metal disk that has a spiral going out from the center, inside of which are depicted the following: a sun symbol, a small creature, some angular writing, a disk like a flying saucer, more hieroglyphs (these looking similar to ancient Chinese Shang writing and even Rongo-Rongo writing from Easter Island), a small alien-looking creature with a big head, some octopus-like creatures and a lizard similar to a chameleon with a tail curved inward (see illustration).

Two views of this curious disk are shown on the book's illustration page. The first photo from directly above the disk is very sharp and shows the various details of the disk quite clearly. Probably this photo is the most intriguing feature of the book, and a picture is worth a thousand words, it is said.

For an ancient disk, the figures and the hieroglyphs are very clear.

The book's dust jacket mentions the theories of Erich von Daniken, and the last few pages theorize about the "sons of god" having children with the daughters of men, and says how the Dzopa were our "brothers from the skies." The book's final paragraph is apparently Gamon speaking about himself:

> Editor's note: Some days after completing this account Karyl Robin-Evans met death with the calmness and courage and the same cool skepticism that gave dignity to the best of his life. He left his little property to the son he fathered with one of his women pupils in 1945, now a television actor much admired for his sardonic good looks, and who would not, I suppose, thank me to name him. He left his curious manuscripts to me, and I have prepared this one as you have read. —David Agamon, Salisbury, 1978

Investigations that have been conducted to find a person named Karyl Robin-Evans indicate that he never existed. In fact, investigations showed that David Agamon didn't exist either. The disk that would seem to be a fascinating vimana-type artifact is, in fact, an admitted hoax.

Photographs of a Dzopa disk from the book *Sungods in Exile*.

The hoax, including the making of the disk, was perpetrated by the copyright owner, David Agamon, whose real name is David Gamon. What we seem to learn here is that David Gamon was struggling as a television actor with "sardonic good looks" in 1978 and had managed to sell a fictional book for a few thousand quid to Neville Spearman, a company that normally published non-fiction. We can guess here that David Gamon was born in

1945 as well. In an interview in the British magazine *Fortean Times* in 1995 Gamon admitted that he used the Agamon pseudonym to write *Sungods in Exile* and that it was his "greatest hoax ever." He went on to write several books on "mind power" after his *Sungods in Exile* hoax.

The "gods from outer space" movement was in full swing during the late 60s and 70s and Gamon told *Fortean Times* that he was inspired by the French novel *Les disques de Biem-Kara* and credits an unnamed "ancient alien" article in a 60s Soviet magazine called *Russian Digest*. Another Russian ancient alien article was published in the Soviet magazine *Sputnik* in 1969 with a very modern illustration of a three-eyed alien holding a spiral disk with a helmeted alien with twin antennae standing on a chessboard. This 1969 Russian illustration is signed by the author, but was still used as a "Ukrainian cave painting" in one of the "gods from outer space" documentaries of the 1970s.

The Dropa Legacy

The popularity of the Dropa disks continues and a psychedelic rock group from Florida has taken the name The Dropa Stones. They give this pop version of the Dropa stone legend on their website (thedropastone.com):

The story of The Dropa Stones continues to be one of the most

tantalizing and fascinating archeological tales ever told. The name derives from a story about strange stones that were allegedly discovered in the mountains of Tibet in 1938. Chinese archeologists found many strange stone disks in a cave that were buried under ground. According to carbon dating, the stones date back almost 10,000 years and contain small hieroglyphic inscriptions.

At first it had been thought that the caves had been the home of an unknown species of ape. But as the species seemed to bury its dead they eliminated an ape race. While studying the skeletons one of the members of a research team stumbled on a large round stone disc half buried in the dust on the floor of the cave. The disc looked like a Stone Age record. There was a hole in the center of and a fine spiral groove that is a continuous spiraling line of closely written characters. No one understood the meanings of the message. The disc was labeled and filed away among other finds in the area. For 20 years many experts in Peking, China tried to translate the disc.

Photograph of Heypah-la and Veez-la from the book *Sungods in Exile*.

This is an interesting take on the Dropa tale, but... carbon dating the stones? Stone or metal disks cannot be carbon dated.

But what of the earlier claims of the Dropa and strange stone disks discovered in western China? Such stone disks have been found amongst skeletons. They are jade disks that are from several inches in diameter to a foot or more in diameter and usually have a hole in the center of them. Some are intricately carved, as the Dropa disks are said to have been, but

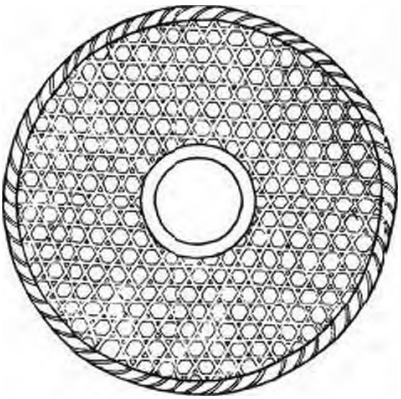
not with hieroglyphs. What there purpose was and even how they were made has been a mystery to archeologists.

Typically made of jade, and even sometimes jade infused with mercury, *Bi* disks are sliced pieces of tubular jade, done with a precision that is quite astounding. Jade is a very hard but soapy stone and has a smooth polished feel and generally a greenish tint to it, though some jades are light red or white. Similar to *Bi* disks and just as mysterious are jade *Cong* cylinders that are large rectangular (or square) jade objects with holes drilled the centers making them appear like a jade axle, perhaps for a chariot wheel, or even a part for vimana—or a sleeve for some electrical device.

Ancient Machine Drills and the Jade Disks of China

To look at the ancient technology that was necessary to create powered flight such as vimanas, it is helpful to find evidence in smaller objects that show evidence of being machined in some way: a hole drilled through very hard basalt, granite, quartz crystal or jade is good. In fact, any object that is engraved or carved that is made out of quartz crystal, jade or basalt—including jars, vases and vessels that are cut out of very hard stone—are objects that we should examine carefully. Unfortunately, metal objects do not tend to last for a long time, only a few hundred years, although gold is known to be ultimately indestructible.

When on a trip to London a few years ago with my wife, Jennifer, we visited the British Museum, one of the finest and most interesting museums in the world. It is a museum with many fascinating exhibits, some of them permanent and some of them temporary. I was particularly pleased when I discovered that the museum was having a special exhibit on Chinese jade *cong* and discs.



An engraved jade *bi* disk.

Two views of a jade *cong* tube.

The plaque at the entrance to the exhibit had three brief paragraphs. It said:

Cong (square tubes with a circular hole) are among the most impressive yet enigmatic of all ancient Chinese jades. Their function and

meaning are completely unknown. The main motif used to decorate them was a simplified monster face pattern, which fitted around the square-sectioned corners. The circles of the eyes on the tall *cong* shown here are only occasionally visible, but the face can be seen more clearly on the shorter bracelet form of *cong*. The tallest *cong* is one of the three tallest in the world.

Discs were among the common burial objects in ancient China, but large, heavy rounded discs of jade, known as *bi*, were probably introduced by the Liangzhu culture. The most finely carved discs of the best stone were often placed at the centre of the body in the tomb. Other *bi* were laid out along the length of the body and underneath it. *Cong* and *bi* are sometimes, but not always, found together.

The carving of objects such as these demanded an enormous amount of jade and skilled labour that only a sophisticated society would have been able to support.

So, these strange objects had a "function and meaning" that was "completely unknown." Archeologists and scholars apparently had no idea what these objects were for, and could not even make a guess. I found this to be very curious. Even more interesting, these *cong* had to be made by a sophisticated drilling process that is virtually identical to the drilling process we use today, and this was in 3400-2250 BC, about 5,000 years ago!

For a simple definition of *bi* disks let us look at the online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, for some simple definitions. Said Wikipedia about the *bi* discs:

The original function and significance of the *bi* are unknown, as the Neolithic cultures have left no written history. From these earliest times they were buried with the dead, as a sky symbol, accompanying the dead into the after world or "sky," with the *cong* which connected the body with the

earth. They were placed ceremonially on the body in the grave of persons of high social status. *Bi* are sometimes found near the stomach and chest in neolithic burials.

Jade, like *bi* disks, has been used throughout Chinese history to indicate an individual of moral quality, and has also served as an important symbol of rank. They were used in worship and ceremony—as ceremonial items they symbolized the ranks of emperor, king, duke, marquis, viscount, and baron with four different *kweis* and two different *bi* disks.

In war during the Zhou dynasty period (1046-256 BC), *bi* disks belonging to the leaders of the defeated forces were handed over to the victor as a sign of submission.

Says Wikipedia about the mysterious *cong*:

A *cong* is a form of jade artifact from ancient China. The earliest *cong* were produced by the Liangzhu culture (34002250 BC); later examples date mainly from the Shang and Zhou dynasties.

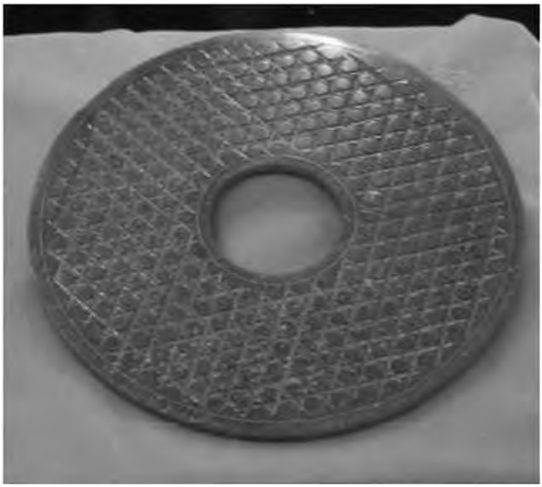
In form, a *cong* is a tube with a circular inner section and squarish outer section. The outer surface is divided vertically or horizontally such that the whole defines a hollow cylinder embedded in a partial rectangular block. Proportions vary—a *cong* may be squat or taller than it is wide. The outer faces are sometimes decorated with masklike faces, which may be related to the *taotie* designs found on later bronze vessels.

Although generally considered to be a ritual object of some sort, the original function and meaning of the *cong* are unknown. Later writings speak of the *cong* as symbolizing the earth, while the *bi* represents the heavens.

The next obvious thing to check out was the mysterious Liangzhu culture

of ancient China. These ancient people seemed to have some pretty advanced technology for their time and they obviously valued jade as some highly desirable stone for their *cong* and *bi*. Says Wikipedia:

> The Liangzhu culture was the last Neolithic jade culture in the Yangtze River Delta of China. Its area of influence extended from around Lake Tai north to Nanjing and the Chang Jiang, east to Shanghai and the sea, and south to Hangzhou. The culture was highly stratified, as jade, silk, ivory and lacquer artifacts were found exclusively in elite burials, while pottery was more commonly found in the burial plots of poorer individuals. The typical site at Liangzhu was discovered in Yuhang County, Zhejiang and initially excavated by Shi Xingeng in 1936.
>
> The culture possessed advanced agriculture, including irrigation, paddy rice cultivation and aquaculture. Houses were often constructed with stilts on rivers or shorelines.



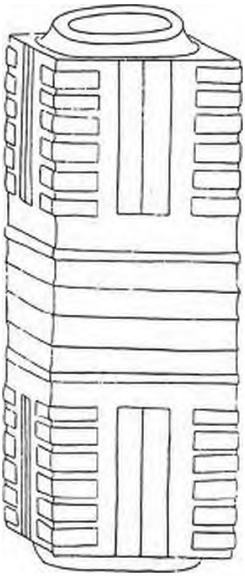
An engraved jade *bi* disk.

The jade from this culture is characterized by finely worked large ritual jades, commonly incised with the *taotie* motif. The most exemplary artifacts from the culture were its *cong* (cylinders). The largest *cong* discovered weighed 3.5 kg. *Bi* (discs) and *Yue* axes (ceremonial axes) were also found. Jade pendants were also found, designed with engraved representations of small birds, turtles and fish. Many Liangzhu jade artifacts had a white milky bonelike aspect due to its tremolite rock origin and influence of water-based fluids at the burial sites, although jade made from actinolite and serpentine were also commonly found.

A neolithic altar from the Liangzhu culture, excavated at Yaoshan in Zhejiang, demonstrates that religious structures were elaborate and made of carefully positioned piles of stones and rock walls: this indicates that religion was of considerable importance.

So, we have an ancient Chinese culture that placed a tremendous importance on jade artifacts that seem to have been machined on a lathe and drilled with tubular drills, probably of some sort of hard metal like bronze. Some of the *bi* are also so carefully inscribed that it would seem that some sort of power tool was being used on the extremely hard jade.

In the case of the *cong*, they have been apparently machined in a number of different ways: First a block of jade was cut in the rough shape of the unfinished *cong*. This would be a very large piece of jade for the largest of the known *cong*. Then this piece of jade was squared and a hole drilled through it (from both ends on the longer *cong*). Finally, the *taotie* motif was carved into the outer shell of the *cong*, including the swirling-sweeping face of the "monster."



A jade cong tube which has a hole drilled through the center.

Looking carefully at the *cong* and the *taotie* motif, which is also found on the famous bronze cauldrons and drums of the Liangzhu and Shang cultures, it would seem that this sweeping design of swirls and circles is somehow associated with the lathes and other power tools that the Liangzhu machinists were using.

These valuable and important artifacts were made on a spinning lathe (and using drills) with artificial pressure applied to them to cut into the jade, and the swirls and circles and nature designs that appear on the outside seem to be consistent with the markings that such a machine would make. Essentially, these are the kind of markings that the tools were capable of making, and so they were incorporated into the designs.

The big question seems to be whether the drills and lathes were powered

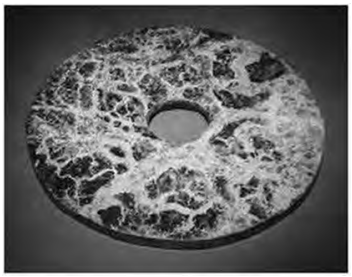
by electricity or merely by a "potter's wheel" type of device. With a potter's wheel, a foot pedal turns a belt that then powers a spinning wheel to create the lathe or drill. A more complicated version of such a machine could include someone on a bicycle-device with a pedal that would also turn a belt, which would rotate a wheel allowing for "powered" drills and other tools.

But, readers of my books and those of Christopher Dunn and others will be aware that there is evidence in the ancient world of large, powered circular saws that were used to cut blocks of granite and basalt; some sort of electricity must have been used to power motors that could turn such large saws. So, were electric motors used to power the lathes and drills used to create the mysterious *cong*? Perhaps one of the reasons that the Chinese of dynasties after the Liangzhu culture worshiped these durable objects is that they were virtually impossible to make without power tools—which these later cultures did not have!

Is it possible the *cong* were some sort of insulator in an electronic device—hence the difficult hollow section in the middle of the *cong*? What this electronic device might have been is completely unknown. I could speculate that it was some plasma (electrified gas) cutting device or flamethrower, or other high-energy tool. This jade outer casing—now called a *cong*—is virtually indestructible and has lasted for thousands of years as a sacred treasure to successive Chinese aristocrats.

In this sense, one wonders if the *cong* and *bi* were made by a culture that was earlier than the Liangzhu culture. The reason I would suggest this is that any culture that was burying these items as funeral objects had probably already lost the meaning of their true purpose— whatever that was. At some point, I surmise, these objects had a practical purpose that is lost today, and apparently lost even to the Liangzhu culture. Similarly, even *cong* and *bi* that are said to have been manufactured by the Shang or Zhou dynasties may have been made many hundreds of years earlier and were inherited

sacred objects rather than items made by these cultures.



A jade *bi* disk, infused with mercury.

The *bi* disks, some of them quite large, appear to have been thicker jade wheels that were also drilled in the center like a *cong* and then sliced by a large power saw, thereby creating three or four thin jade disks from one thick one. Some of these jade disks were then ornately inscribed with geometric patterns, again by what seems to be a power tool.

In his 1912 book *Jade: A Study in Chinese Archaeology and Religion,* jade scholar Berthold Laufer discusses *cong* and *bi* disks, though he calls the disks *pi,* and the *cong* he calls a jade tube "ta t'sung." Laufer has a number of photos and diagrams of the jade tubes and *bi* and, like other scholars, is completely baffled as to what they were for. He concludes that the jade tubes and sliced disks were ritual objects of some kind, symbolizing heaven and earth in some lost ancient ritual. He does comment curiously on the suggestion of a Dr. Bushell that these jade tubes, with square outer sides, were possible wheel naves—the central block or hub of a wheel. Laufer discounts this theory stating that jade was too important, rare and valuable to be used in this way, even if it were for the emperor. He does admit, though, that they do look like wheel naves.[8]

Laufer gives a good description of several *cong* in his book, including one

that was curiously infused with mercury:

> Both are hollow cylinders, round inside and square in cut outside, with two short protecting round necks at both ends; the former plain, without any ornamentation, of a dark-colored or dark-green jade with black veins all over, and as he says, saturated with mercury; the other piece of a uniformly black jade is decorated along the four corners with nine separate rectangular fields in relief carvings. The ornamentation in each field is the same; two bands consisting of five lines each, two knobs below, and a smaller band filled with spirals and groups of five strokes alternately horizontal and vertical. The prominent corner ornaments are called with the special name *tsu*. The protruding ring-shaped necks receive the name *she*, a word which is used also in the jade tablets called *chang* to denote the triangular point at the upper end.[8]

It is curious that one of the *cong* is saturated with mercury. This strange metal is an element, a liquid and a conductor that was said to be used in ancient vimanas. The ancient emperor of China, Chi Huang Ti, who built the Great Wall and ordered most of the libraries in China destroyed, is said to be buried in an enormous tomb 30 km from Xian, the location of the famous terra cotta army. His court historian described the tomb as having extravagantly rich models of earthly delights, including bronze mountains and rivers of mercury that actually flowed to a mercury-filled sea. Archeologists are afraid to excavate the tomb because of the complex conditions they expect to encounter, but probes into the tomb have shown highly elevated mercury levels. If the original purpose of the *cong* was as the hub of some sort of mechanical device, would it have become saturated in mercury if that was part of the machine? It would seem so. Perhaps this is the case with this mercury-infused *cong*.

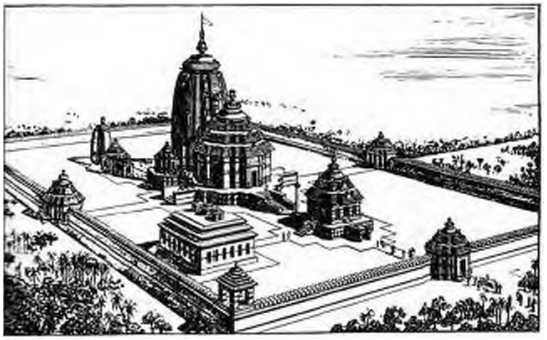
While the *bi* and *cong* are fascinating and mysterious for Laufer, he says nothing about how they would have been made or how difficult it would be to make them. It took decades for the British Museum to finally study the *cong* that they had and conclude that some sort of drilling process was used. And what about the *cong* being some sort of nave or hub used in machinery? Because of its naturally smooth soapy surface and square outer hub it could lock into a large piece of metal such as a large metal blade. Could the *cong* have been hubs for some sort of machinery like giant circular saws—saws used to cut jade or other stone in thin disks or make other fine cuts? It could have been the hub for a spinning device that powered a drill—perhaps a quartz crystal or diamond tipped drill.

Jade discs—bi—are often plain and smooth but some have cuts and engravings in them. None have any sort of hieroglyphs or writing on them, and none look like the disk photographed in the book *Sungods in Exile*. While we might conclude that much of the story of the Dropa and its disks is a hoax, the mystery of *bi* disks and jade *congs* is quite real.

The Stone Disks, the Dropa and the Black Pagoda

The fascinating quest for ancient technology like power drills and saws makes us wonder what the ancients would have done with their tools. Would they have cut huge rocks and lifted them to the top of a building, such as the stone that crowned the Sun Temple of Konarak in Orissa (now commonly called Odisha)? Perhaps they would make cuts in solid rock like at the cave sites of Ajanta or Elephanta. Such authors and speculators as Madame Blavatsky, Talbot Mundy, Katherine Tingley, Nicholas Roerich and even Franklin D. Roosevelt wondered about the many spectacular engineering works made by advanced civilizations such as the Rama Empire described by Valmiki, or Atlantis as described by Plato. Were they describing the past, or merely predicting the future?

Madame Blavatsky and the pulp author Talbot Mundy described high-tech tunnel systems built through the great mountain ranges of the world. Mundy described in his book *Om: The Secret of Ahbor Valley* a huge underground tunnel that ran beneath the Brahmaputra River in eastern Tibet that was cut out of solid stone and included huge stone steps that seemed created for men and women of much larger stature than those of today.



A plan of the temple at Konarak in Odisha.

One of the largest stones in the world was the capstone on the Sun Temple at Konarak on the east coast of India, which was built of black granite. As a major landmark on the eastern coast of India, Konarak was called the Black Pagoda by sailors, and they called the Jagannath Temple in nearby Puri the White Pagoda. Legend has it that the Black Pagoda is thousands of years old and was built by Samba, the son of Lord Krishna (who hails from Gujarat on the west coast). According to legend, Samba was afflicted by leprosy but after doing penance for twelve years, was cured by Surya, the Sun God. Samba then built the Konarak temple to honor the Sun God. The local name for the temple has traditionally been Konarka or Konark, after *kona* (corner) and *arka* (sun).

Says the UNESCO website about Konarak (whc.unesco.org):

Against the horizon, on the sandy shore, where the rising Sun emerges from the waters of the Gulf of Bengal, stands the temple, built from stone and carefully oriented so as to permit the first rays of the Sun to strike its principal entry. It is a monumental representation of the chariot of Surya pulled by a team of seven horses (six of which still exist and are placed on either side of the stairway leading to the sanctuary).

On the north and south sides, 24 wheels some 3 m in diameter, lavishly sculptured with symbolic motives referring to the cycle of the seasons and the months, complete the illusionary structure of the temple-chariot. Between the wheels, the plinth of the temple is entirely decorated with reliefs (fantastic lions, musicians and dancers, erotic groups). Like many Indian temples, Konarak comprises several distinct and well-organized spatial units. The *vimana* (principal sanctuary) was surmounted by a high tower with a *sikkara* which was razed in the 19th century; to the east, the *jahamogana* (audience hall) now dominates the ruins with its pyramidal mass, the original effect.

Further to the east, the *natmandir* (dance hall), today unroofed, rises on a high platform. Various subsidiary structures are still to be found within the enclosed area of the rectangular wall, which is punctuated by its gates and towers.

Apart from the Puranas, other religious texts also point towards the existence of a Sun temple at Konârak long before the present temple. Konarak was once a bustling port of Kalinga and had good maritime trade relations with South-East Asian countries.

The Black Pagoda at Konarak as photographed in 1890.

The Black Pagoda at Konarak in Odisha.

So, the entire temple is built as a huge stone chariot of the Sun God, with a set of exquisitely carved stone spokes on the gigantic wheels, and other elaborate carvings. Like many ancient sites that are built out of large stones, this one was attributed to or appropriated by various kings over thousands of years, and historians struggle to find some historical ruler that they can pin the structure on. In the case of the Black Pagoda, it is sometimes

attributed to King Narasingha Deva (1238-64) who may have built the temple in 1250 AD. Yet, one would think that records would have been kept at the time, and the local script has been around for thousands of years. If local legend says that the son of Krishna built the amazing structure, then that would indicate that the locals believed it to be thousands of years old, even a few hundred years ago. By around 1700 AD the Black Pagoda was thought to be in ruins and the coastal area around it was devoid of towns or any real population.

The giant building has a rounded dome that was once topped with a gigantic slab of granite that weighed about 60 tons. In some tales of the temple, it was a gigantic lodestone (or loadstone) magnet of basalt-granite that allowed magnetic forces to be manipulated, including levitating statues inside the building. Gone now in the collapse of the temple hundreds of years ago, this magnetic capstone was somehow lifted to the top of the building, and then more stone was cut and carved into a *sikkara* tower.

Certain temples of the ancient world were known for statues that levitated or floated in the air, and Konarak was one of them. The Greek philosopher Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) relates the story of a temple that was to have been built with a magnetically suspended statue but was never completed:

> ... the temple of Arsinoe was to have been vaulted with magnetic stone, in order to receive a hovering statue of Arsinoe made of iron, according to the arrangement of Ptolemaus Philadelphus, but who, as well as the architect, died before the completion of the temple.

The 11th century AD Greek historian Cedrenus (Kedrenos) in his ambitious book, written circa 1050 AD, *A Concise History of the World,* describes a statue that was levitated at temple in Alexandria, Egypt: "an ancient image in the Serapium at Alexandria was 'suspended by magnetic force.'" This

should not be confused with the Serapeum near Giza which is an underground complex containing a number of perfectly manufactured basalt boxes that weigh from 60 to 80 tons apiece.

The inside of the collapsed Black Pagoda drawn in 1812.

The Black Pagoda at Konarak as drawn in 1847 by James Fergusson.

Similarly, the Roman historian and statesman Cassiodorus (c.485-c.585 AD) stated in his attempt at world history, *Chronica*, that "in the temple of Diana hung an iron Cupid without being held by any band."

Just as today organized religion is something of a racket with awesome

sanctuaries built to impress, ancient churches had doors that opened automatically, fountains that began to spout suddenly and—beyond your standard temple magic—statues that levitated in the middle of a large room. It would seem that the ancient and gigantic edifice called Konarak was one of these temples, perhaps the one that inspired the others. It is (was) a megalithic engineering marvel and if it had magnetic stones purposefully built into the structure then it would be even more amazing.

The Black Pagoda was said to have, in addition to the gigantic magnetic capstone, a similar magnetic slab of lodestone or magnetic basalt imbedded in the floor of the great hall. Here the magnetic field created by the two huge magnets could suspend a paramagnetic statue in mid-building, such as one made of iron or a gold-clad magnetic alloy.

The walls of the Black Pagoda were nearly 25 feet thick and some researchers theorize that magnets were also placed in the thick walls to help levitate the giant statue there, presumably of the Sun God. It should be noted that a "Sun god" is not part of the Hindu trinity, that being comprised of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

By the 1700s the temple had become completely overgrown by the local forest and had become the abode of wild animals and coastal pirates; local people became afraid to go there. What caused the once mighty temple to fall into disuse—and when this happened—is still speculated upon by local historians. The Government of Odisha, which has a whole webpage dedicated to "the fall of Konarak" (konarak.nic.in/fall.htm) gives no less than 11 different speculative answers as to why the gigantic temple complex became neglected ruins in a coastal jungle. These speculations include the idea that the temple was never completely finished and collapsed on itself (judged "not tenable" by the anonymous writers of the webpage). Or perhaps, according to the webpage, that the temple lost its sanctity because "according to the legend of Dharmapad, due to committed suicide of Dharmapada on

the temple just after placing its crowning stone, the temple lost its sanctity and considered as an unfortunate (Asuva) element and was thus rejected. But it is recorded in the Madala Panji and many historians are of opinion that Sun god had been established in the temple and was being worshipped regularly for years together. So this argument is also not acceptable, being unfounded on history."

Other reasons given are as follows (note that English is not the first language of the writer):

The Curse of Sumanyu: The great poet of Orissa Sri Radhanath Ray in his Kavya 'Chandrabhaga' has narrated a story about the cause of the fall of temple. According to that Kavya, Sumanyu Risi (saint) cursed the Sun god for his ill-behavior towards his daughter Chandrabhaga, who committed suicide. Hence the temple of the Sun god fell down. But such an imaginary story cannot be taken as a historical occurrence.

Engineering Defects: An opinion of some Engineers, as usual with the progress of construction of the temple walls, its outside and inside were being filled with sand. After completion of the temple when the sands were cleared both from inside and outside, due to imbalance of pressure of walls the temple fell down. But many scholars do not agree with this argument, when they find the existence of a throne of the Sun god inside the temple. They also do not accept that such a procedure was followed in constructing the Sun temple. Besides there are historical documents that the Sun god was being worshipped in the newly constructed temple for a considerable period.

Earthquake: Some scholars are of the view that due to earthquake the temple fell down. It is also not impossible on the part of a strong earthquake to demolish such a large structure at a moment. But there is no proof in support of occurring such an earthquake in this area. There is

also no sign of suppression of the foundation of the temple at any direction. Had there been any such a strong earthquake causing the fall of the Sun temple, it could have also created a devastation in [the] Konark area. And such an occurrence could have been remembered by the people as they have remembered the story of Dharmapada, Ramachandi and Bisu Maharana. Nowhere there exists such a devastating statement [of a big earthquake].

Thunderstruck: The arguments that the temple was affected due to Thunderstruck is also not acceptable. Since the temple walls are of 20 to 25 feet in thickness it is not at all possible on the part of any thunderstruck to disturb it in any manner.

Weak Foundation: It is also stated that due to weak foundation of such a heavy structure the temple fell down. But as stated earlier the temple was founded on a deep gorge of a river to make it stronger. And also there is no sign of sinking in any part. So this argument is also not founded on good grounds.

The website then goes on make this unusual statement about the legend of a powerfully magnetic loadstone that was the capstone for the gigantic temple:

Loadstone: is described that in the part there was a loadstone on the top of the Sun temple and due to its magnetic effects it was drawing vessels passing through the Konark sea resulting in heavy damage. In others view due to the magnetic effects of the loadstone placed on the top of the Sun temple the compass fitted in the ships to show the direction, was being disturbed and was not functioning properly and it was a troubling task in the part of the captains to drive their vessels in right direction. So to make the shipping safe, the Muslim voyagers took away the load stone

from the Sun temple. This loadstone on the temple was working as the central stone keeping all the stones of the temple wall in a balance. Due to its displacement, the temple walls lost their balance and fell down in course of time. But such a statement has no record in history nor has got any proof about the existence of such a powerful loadstone on the temple top.

It is interesting to note that the legendary magnetic qualities of the Black Pagoda were said to help guide seafarers with their compasses, or on the other hand, interfere with them. Is it possible that the Black Pagoda was also some sort of beacon/directional finder for vimanas, built thousands of years ago? The website goes on to mention other said causes of the collapse of the temple, including a giant statue of a flying lion that was on the upper part of the structure that caused it to collapse, and the theory that it had been hastily constructed—in a fortnight in some legends—and the walls were unable to hold the gigantic capstone.

Finally, the government gives the more standard theory that the destruction of the Black Pagoda was done in an Islamic invasion under the command of a general named Kalapahad. Kalapahad, a former Hindu who had converted to Islam, had been sent at the head of an army by the Bengal Sultan Sulaiman Karann to invade Orissa in 1508 AD. Says the website, which calls the Black Pagoda by the Orissan name Konark:

According to the history of Orissa, Kalapahad invaded Orissa in 1508. Including Konark temple he had also destroyed a number of Hindu temples in Orissa. It is described in the Madala Panji [archive] of Puri Jagannath temple that Kalapahad attacked Orissa in 1568 and it was an evil hour for Orissa. Including Konark temple he broke most of the images in most of the Hindu temples in Orissa. Though it was impossible to break the

Sun temple of Konark, the stone walls of which are of 20 to 25 feet thick he somehow managed to displace the Dadhinauti (Arch stone) and thus made a way for the temple to collapse. He also broke most of the images and other side temples of Konark. Due to displacement of the Dadhinauti, the temple gradually collapsed and the roof of the Mukasala also got damage due to the stroke of the stones falling down from the temple top.

Consequent upon, Orissa came under the Muslim administration in 1568 and there were constant attempts to destroy the Hindu temples. The Pandas of Puri, to save the sanctity of the Puri temple, took away the Lord Jagannath from the Srimandir and kept the image in a secret place. Similarly, it is said that the Pandas of Konark took away the presiding deity of the Sun temple out of the temple and put under sand for some years. Later on the said image was removed to Puri and kept in the temple of Indra in the compound of the Puri Jagannath temple. According to others, the Puja image of the Konark temple is yet to be discovered. But others hold the view that the Sun image now kept in the National Museum, Delhi was the presiding deity of the Konark Sun temple.

However, the Sun worship in the Konark temple was stopped consequent upon the removal of the image from the temple. This resulted in stopping of pilgrims to Konark. So also the port at Konark was closed due to attacks of pirates. Konark was as glorious a city for Sun worship as for commercial activities. But after the cessation of these activities, Konark turned to a deserted place and in ravages of time it became a field of pirates and wild animals. As a result Konark left to develop as a dense forest for years together.

Later in the history given on this website we learn that parts of the famous Jagganath Temple in nearby Puri is built from stones taken from the Black Pagoda—the fate of many ancient buildings, to have their moveable parts

confiscated and re-used. Mainstream archeologists say that the Black Pagoda was somehow built by King Narasingha Deva in 1250 AD, but given the size of the capstone, this seems unlikely. It would seem that archeologists don't know who the mysterious builder of this amazing structure was, but are unwilling to give it a great age because it would mean that the great civilizations of India did go many thousands of years into antiquity. The Black Pagoda may have been built around 3000 BC, an astonishing age to the mainstream archeologists. It may be even older than that, with legends essentially saying that the structure is from about the time of the devastating Kurushetra War of which Krishna was a part. We do not know when this war was, perhaps 5000 or 8000 BC.

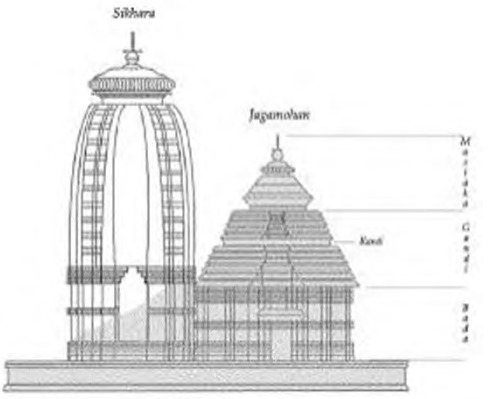


Diagram of the original design of the Black Pagoda at Konarak.

This was a time of vimanas, so we might presume that advanced technology was used in the building of the structure, including giant saws, power grinders and drills, and some unknown technology of levitating giant stones or making them weightless. Perhaps heavy-lifting vimanas were used to put the giant capstone in place. Like such structures as Baalbek in

Lebanon, the Osirion in Egypt or the ruins of Puma Punku in Bolivia, the giant stones of Konarak were part of a nearly indestructible building that incorporated huge blocks of heavy granite stone interlocked together. Once assembled, these huge buildings are hard to take apart, though places like Puma Punku have been destroyed in some sort cataclysm of earthquakes and floods.

The giant chariot called the Juggernaut drawn in 1921.

Some of the temples at Mahabalipuram.

A similar mysterious complex, including a gigantic boulder that may have been levitated into place, exists further south along the east coast of India, at a place called Mahabalipuram. The ancient site is about 60 km south of the city of Chennai (formerly Madras) in Tamil Nadu state.

Mahabalipuram is an ancient seaport which is mentioned during the time of such Greek writers as Periplus and Ptolemy (c.140 AD). It is not known how old Mahabalipuram is, but it can easily be dated to 500 BC and probably many hundreds of years earlier. Mahabalipuram is the sort of ancient port used by such sailors as the legendary Sinbad from Tales of the Arabian Nights, a port from which Indian and Omani traders sailed to the islands of Southeast Asia—to Sumatra, Java, Bali and beyondl Tales of gigantic birds in Madagascar and New Zealand fueled the many legends, as did the huge monitor lizards on Komodo Island or the saltwater crocodiles that can grow over 10 meters (30 feet) in length. During the seventh century AD the port was controlled by the South Indian dynasty known as the Pallavas.

Mahabalipuram is made up of a group of sanctuaries, some of which were carved out of solid rock, but there are also megalithic walls and

structures. Rathas (temples in the form of chariots), cave sanctuaries, giant open-air reliefs, a huge balanced stone boulder and the Shore Temple are all here at a site with thousands of sculptures to the glory of Shiva. The entire area has been classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The stone-cutting shows extremely excellent workmanship, and it is easy to speculate that power tools may have been involved.

The balanced boulder called "Krishna's Butterball" at Mahabalipuram.

Some of the temples at Mahabalipuram.

The monuments are mostly rock-cut and monolithic, and archeologists admit that the carving at Mahabalipuram must have required hundreds of highly skilled sculptors many years to complete. Also in the vicinity is the huge stone boulder, seemingly levitated and put into a precarious, but immovable spot, is known as Krishna's Butterball. The boulder is a 5 meter-high (14-foot) balanced rock that is perched on a smooth slope, seemingly in defiance of the laws of physics. It is known as "Krishna's Butterball" because in Hindu mythology Lord Krishna was famous for his appetite for butter. As a child the little jokester would sneak a handful of butter from his mother's butter jar. No one knows who placed the giant boulder on the hill, but it must have been a long time ago. While skeptics will maintain that it is just an oddball natural feature, locals have the strong belief that gods and supernatural powers such as vimanas and levitation are at work here. A similar boulder is located in southeast Myanmar and is known as the Golden Rock. Here a Buddhist monastery and guesthouse watches over a large, gilded boulder precariously balanced on a sloping rock at the edge of a cliff.

Bits and Pieces of Vimanas: The Wedge of Aiud

One would think that some mysterious metal objects would occasionally

turn up at archeological digs and other earth-moving projects, and indeed they do! In fact, a Romanian Museum claims to have part of the landing gear from a vimana, a five-pound metal object known as the Wedge of Aiud. The oddball artifact looking like a large hammer is today in the town of Cluj at the Museum of the History of Transylvania.

A number of news articles on the object, with photographs, have appeared in magazines such as *Fortean Times* and *World Explorer* as well as online sites. The object was found on the bank of the Mures River near the Transylvanian town of Aiud in 1973. Workers were clearing away and digging along the river when they discovered the jaw of a mastodon and other bones, plus the metallic object. All of these items were found beneath a 35-foot layer of sand.

It sat in a storeroom at the museum in Cluj until the editors of a Romanian UFO magazine stumbled upon the object while on a visit in 1995. Their study showed that the dimensions of the object were 8.25 by 5 by 2.75 inches. Its weight is approximately five pounds; because it is 89 per cent aluminum, it seems very light for a metal object of its size. The object has two arms with two different-sized holes at each end. There are some traces of tool marks on the sides of the object.

Romanian researcher Boczor Iosif said in a report to the British magazine *Fortean Times* that a piece of this object was examined at a research center at Margurele, Romania. According to Iosif, the analysis said that the object contains 12 elements: 89 percent aluminum, 6.2 percent copper, 2.84 percent silicon, 1.81 percent zinc, 0.41 percent lead, 0.33 percent tin, 0.2 percent zirconium, 0.11 percent cadmium, 0.0024 percent nickel, 0.0023 percent cobalt, 0.0003 percent bismuth, and trace of galium.

Iosif says that the Wedge of Aiud is covered in a thick layer of aluminum oxide and he maintains that specialists who examined the object concluded that it would take hundreds of years for this oxide to build up. This would

mean that the object was at least 300 or 400 years old, and perhaps much older. Iosif also confirms that a lab in Lausanne, Switzerland had done tests on the object and these technicians were surprised to find an ancient object like this made of aluminum, as this metal wasn't really available until the mid 1800s.

A photo of the Wedge of Aiud.

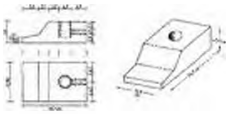


Diagram of the Wedge of Aiud.

Drawings released by the Romanian UFO group showed the wedge as the possible foot of some sort of landing gear and so the Wedge of Aiud garnered titles such as "Vimana Landing Gear Discovered" in press coverage.

Other specialists in Romania, says Iosif, say that the discovery of the mastodon bone means that the object could be as old as 20,000 years. He goes on to say that Romanians suppose that this chunk of metal was part of some flying machine that fell into the Mures River. People speculate that it was part of a vimana or had an extraterrestrial origin. Some in Romania think that it was part of a tool—but cannot think what that tool might have been. Indeed, this "oopart" or "out-of-place-artifact" may be part of some ancient spaceship, extraterrestrial or terrestrial—a vimana of sorts.

Other ooparts that may have been parts of ancient vimanas include the Coso Artifact, something of a spark plug found in a geode in the Coso Mountains of California, as well as some of the quartz crystal objects that can been found in museums around the world. I pay careful attention to any quartz crystal or basalt objects found in museums, especially if they are well made. The creation of well made basalt or quartz crystal objects generally requires power tools of some sort.

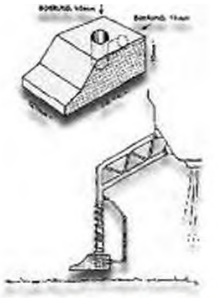


Diagram of the Wedge of Aiud.

Afghan Vimana

Of a more dubious nature are the reports, starting in 2010, that American soldiers stationed in Afghanistan discovered a vimana in cave that was searched in a remote mountain area of that country. According to one such report at theghostdiaries.com:

> According to these reports, a 5,000 year old Vimana was discovered entombed in a time well that had resulted in 8 troops disappearing, likely being incinerated. These reports have even suggested the Vimana is still activating, which is what caused the death of the soldiers as well as the disclosure that the original owner of the magical Vimana was none other

than the ancient prophet Zoroaster.

As described in the *Mahabarata*, Vedas, and other Sanskrit texts, the Vimanas were 12 cubits in circumference and equipped with powerful exotic energy weapons that can essentially absorb a target in its vicinity. Other researchers have suggested that some interpretations of the ancient texts point to even stranger powers: invisibility (or "antima"), levitation, and "garima", or the power to suddenly absorb tremendous weight. Sounds like powers that top brass at the United Nations might be interested in, which is perhaps the reason that no less than four world leaders paid unscheduled visits to Afghanistan in December of 2010.

The early reports of the story mentioned that it was originally a Russian intelligence report given to the Prime Minister at the time, Vladimir Putin, which sparked the news articles. The alleged report to Putin included references to the mysterious "time well" and the sudden visits of world leaders to Afghanistan. Said the report from EU Times (eutimes.net) on December 21, 2010, under the title "World Leaders Flock to Afghanistan After Mysterious 'Time Well'":

A peculiar report prepared for Prime Minister Putin by Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) circulating in the Kremlin today states that German Chancellor Angela Merkel has become the latest in a growing line of Western leaders to make a 'surprise' visit to Afghanistan this month and follows visits by United States President Obama (December 3rd), British Prime Minister David Cameron (December 7th) and French President Nicolas Sarkozy (December 8th).

Only Sarkozy's trip, this report says, was concealed as he was already in India on a state visit when 'rushed' by a US Military aircraft to the Afghan war zone.

What caused the sudden rush of these most powerful leaders of the Western World to go to Afghanistan, this report continues, was to directly view the discovery by US Military scientists of what is described as a "vimana" entrapped in a "Time Well" that has already caused the "disappearance" of at least 8 American Soldiers trying to remove it from the cave it has been hidden in for the past estimated 5,000 years.

From the ancient accounts found in the Sanskrit epic The Mahabharata, we know that a vimana measured twelve cubits in circumference, with four strong wheels. Apart from its 'blazing missiles', The Mahabharata records the use of its other deadly weapons that operated via a circular 'reflector'. When switched on, it produced a 'shaft of light' which, when focused on any target, immediately 'consumed it with its power'.

To the "Time Well" encasing the vimana, this report continues, it appears to be an electromagnetic radiation-gravity field first postulated by Albert Einstein as the Unified Field Theory and long rumored to be behind the infamous American World War II experiment in teleportation called the Philadelphia Experiment that in 1943, like the events occurring in Afghanistan today, likewise, caused the sudden "disappearance" of US Soldiers.

The seemingly "perpetual" power source to this mysterious "Time Well", this SVR report says, appears to be based on the technology of Edward Leedskalnin, who claimed to have discovered the "Secret Knowledge of the Ancients" and from 1923-1951 "single-handedly and secretly" carved over 1,100 tons of coral rock by an unknown process that created one of the World's most mysterious accomplishments known as the Coral Castle.

Most intriguing of all about this report is its stating that not just any vimana has been discovered, but from the ancient writings contained in the cave where it was discovered, it claims that its "rightful owner" is the

ancient prophet Zoroaster who was the founder of arguably one of the most important religions of all time called Zoroastrianism.

Though little known to the World today, the religious philosophy of Zoroaster is credited with being the basis of all known religions that said the purpose of humankind, like that of all other creation, is to sustain aša [truth]. He further stated that for humankind, this occurs through active participation in life and the exercise of constructive thoughts, words and deeds.

Pliny the Elder, the first Century Roman author, naturalist, and natural philosopher, as well as naval and army commander of the early Roman Empire, further names Zoroaster as the "inventor of magic", a claim historians say was based on the over "two million lines" written about Zoroaster contained in the Ancient Royal Library of Alexandria that was ordered destroyed by the Christian Roman Emperor Theodosius I in 391 AD.

Important to note is that for the new Christian religion to grow, all of the elements relating to its true beginnings with Zoroaster had to be destroyed, and as we can read from the 440 AD notation about this destruction written in the ancient *Historia Ecclesiastica,* and which says:

"At the solicitation of Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, the emperor issued an order at this time for the demolition of the heathen temples in that city; commanding also that it should be put in execution under the direction of Theophilus. Seizing this opportunity, Theophilus exerted himself to the utmost to expose the pagan mysteries to contempt. And to begin with, he caused the Mithreum to be cleaned out, and exhibited to public view the tokens of its bloody mysteries. Then he destroyed the Serapeum, and the bloody rites of the Mithreum he publicly caricatured; the Serapeum also he showed full of extravagant superstitions, and he had the phalli of Priapus carried through the midst of the forum. ...Thus this disturbance having been terminated, the governor of Alexandria, and the

commander-in-chief of the troops in Egypt, assisted Theophilus in demolishing the heathen temples."

... Today, in the ancient Afghanistan city of Balkh, where Zoroaster is said to have lived and died, and claimed by Marco Polo to be one of the World's "noble and great cities," a new Global Empire, the United States, holds both our past and our future in its hands with the discovery of this ancient Vimana.

To if the Western leaders who have seen this ancient wonder will allow it to be known it is not in our knowing. What is in our knowing, though, is that if the past is truly an indicator of the future, the words soon to flow from Christendom will echo those of times past. "Kill Them All, The Lord Will Recognize His Own."

It seems that the ultimate source of this feature-editorial sent as a news story is "Sorcha Faal" who is said to be a person named David Booth "from the military industrial complex." Frequently quoting Russian intelligence reports, "Sorchal Faal" gives a daily, fascinating spin on the news, typically with a conspiracy and secret government slant. Often such news has some real component to it, coupled with disinformation and sometimes an element of the completely wacky.

We can probably put this story in that category and speculate that the wacky part is the 'Time Well' and the discovery of the vimana in a cave. That many of the important NATO leaders flew to Afghanistan during a certain time period in December of 2010 is the real story, but it might well have been for some other reasons that these politicians made the trip—including convenience and safety. In the philosophy of most who think about this subject, it seems unlikely that a cave like this would remain undiscovered for all these years. Such special treasures would usually be guarded by a secret society or such, and not be left to be found by American soldiers in

Afghanistan.

Still, the finding of Zoroaster's personal vimana is the kind of amusing story that I would hope would come out in the news— now more scattered and weird than ever—and it is a tribute to the enduring tales of vimanas in modern culture. They are not of the ilk of Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny, they are part of our history— part of the ancient texts—but how do we fit them into the reality that we have been constructing for ourselves over the past hundred years or so? Where do these ancient flying machines really fit in?

The Modern UFO Enigma and the Ancient Vimana Enigma

Today, if we look up from the road we are walking down, or the backyard we are walking through, we might see something in the sky. In the daytime, we might see an airplane with its cloudy tail streaking by. If we lived near an airport we might see these things all the time. In a remote area, we might see them only very occasionally. That is today. Was it like that yesterday?

Indeed, the stories of vimanas, often involving humans interacting with extraterrestrials from other planets and other solar systems, are very much like the many stories associated with the modern UFO enigma, starting during WWII in the 1940s. The great inventor Nikola Tesla passed on in 1943, which marked the end of the era where Tesla told the world what sort of super-science electrical world they should expect to come about. Tesla would not be heard of again, with his death rays and wireless power for anti-gravity ships. Instead, the horror of WWII raged across most of the world, and oil companies began to take control of the popular conception of energy. It would be oil and gas that meant energy, not electricity with its direct current and alternating current that would power the future.

Many modern UFO sightings describe spinning disk-shaped craft with bright running lights and often powerful searchlights. These searchlights

are often tractor beams as well, capable of grabbing on object—such as a human or a cow—and pulling it inside of a hovering craft.

The vimana texts seem to indicate that mercury was somehow used in the powering of the ancient craft. Is it possible that some modern UFO craft are using some sort of mercury engine that allows a spinning craft to fly, and gives it a bright glowing appearance as well, like a mercury vapor light? Outside of Las Vegas is the famous Area 51 military site where flying saucers, flying triangles and other craft are built with "out of this world" technology. The town where the workers enter the huge military site in southwestern Nevada is called "Mercury" and a highway sign to Mercury appears as an exit sign at that spot. Why is the research town and checkpoint at Area 51 called Mercury? Is it because the liquid metal mercury is used in the highly classified research?

The Mercury Vortex Engine Concept

The idea of Mercury Vortex Engines being used in vimanas was first mentioned by the British writer Desmond Leslie in 1955 in his introduction to George Adamski's *Inside the Spaceships*.[18] Leslie mentions the ancient Indian text called the *Samarangana Sutradhara*. This text mentions vimanas and how mercury was used to power the craft, and this was an intriguing idea to Leslie as well as to British author, zoologists and reseacher Ivan T. Sanderson. Sanderson was intersted in UFOs as well as unknown animals and in his 1970 book *Invisible Residents*[17] he addresses the idea of Mercury Vortex Engines.

Sanderson says that the *Samarangana Sutradhara* informs us that vimanas were made of light material, with a strong, well-shaped body. Iron, copper and lead were used in their construction. They could fly great distances and were propelled by air. Sanderson says that the text devotes 230 stanzas to the building of these machines, and their uses in peace and war.

Quoting from the text:

> Strong and durable must the body be made, like a great flying bird, of light material. Inside it one must place the Mercury-engine with its iron heating apparatus beneath. By means of the power latent in the mercury which sets the driving whirlwind in motion, a man sitting inside may travel a great distance in the sky in a most marvelous manner.
>
> Similarly by using the prescribed processes one can build a vimana as large as the temple of the God-in-motion. Four strong mercury containers must be built into the interior structure. When these have been heated by controlled fire from iron containers, the vimana develops thunder-power through the mercury. And at once it becomes a pearl in the sky.
>
> Moreover, if this iron engine with properly welded joints be filled with mercury, and the fire be conducted to the upper part it develops power with the roar of a lion.[17]

Sanderson then goes on to make the basic observation that a circular dish of mercury revolves in a contrary manner to a naked flame circulated below it, and that it gathers speed until it exceeds the speed of revolution of said flame. Sanderson's observation of revolving mercury is one of the first references to what we now call Mercury Vortex Engines.

We also got information from the *Vimanika Shastra* of some sort of Mercury Vortex Engines. In chapter five of the *Vimanika Shastra,* Sastri/ Bharadwaja describes, from the ancient texts which are his reference, how to create an imaging device that involves mercury and crystals:

> Prepare a square or circular base of 9 inches width with wood and glass, mark its centre, and from about an inch and half thereof draw lines to the edge in the 8 directions, fix 2 hinges in each of the lines in order to

open and shut. In the centre erect a 6 inch pivot and four tubes, made of vishvodara metal, equipped with hinges and bands of iron, copper, brass or lead, and attach to the pegs in the lines in the several directions. The whole is to be covered.

Prepare a mirror of perfect finish and fix it to the danda or pivot. At the base of the pivot an electric yantra should be fixed. Crystal and glass beads should be fixed at the base, middle, and end of the pivot or by its side. The circular or goblet shaped mirror for attracting solar rays should be fixed at the foot of the pivot. To the west of it the image-reflector should be placed. Its operation is as follows:

First the pivot or pole should be stretched by moving the keelee or switch. The observation mirror should be fixed at its base. A vessel with mercury should be fixed at its bottom. In it a crystal bead with a hole should be placed. Through the hole in the chemically purified bead, sensitive wires should be passed and attached to the end beads in various directions. At the middle of the pole, a mustard cleaned solar mirror should be fixed. At the foot of the pole a vessel should be placed with liquid ruchaka salt. A crystal should be fixed in it with a hinge and wiring. In the bottom centre should be placed a goblet-like circular mirror for attracting solar rays. To the west of it a reflecting mechanism should be placed. To the east of the liquid salt vessel, the electric generator should be placed and the wiring of the crystal attached to it. The current from both the yantras should be passed to the crystal in the liquid ruchaka salt vessel. Eight parts of sun-power in the solar reflector and 12 parts of electric power should be passed through the crystal into the mercury and on to the universal reflecting mirror. And that mirror should be focussed in the direction of the region which has to be photographed. The image which appears in the facing lens will then be reflected through the crystal in the liquid salt solution. The picture which will appear in the mirror will

be true to life, and enable the pilot to realize the conditions of the concerned region, and he can take appropriate action to ward off danger and inflict damage on the enemy.[48]

Two paragraphs later Bharadwaja seems to describe a mercury vortex engine in a glass ball and says:

... Two circular rods made of magnetic metal and copper should be fixed on the glass ball so as to cause friction when they revolve. To the west of it a globular ball made of vaatapaa glass with a wide open mouth should be fixed.

From the text of the *Vimanika Shastra* it is apparent that mercury, copper, magnets, electricity, crystals, gyros (?) and other pivots, plus antennas, are all part of at least one kind of vimana. The recent resurgence in the esoteric and scientific use of crystals is interesting in the context of the *Vimanika Shastra*. Crystals, *mani* in Sanskrit, are apparently as integral a part of vimanas as they are today in a digital watch. Crystals, at the very least, can be part of an electrical control system and computer memory. See my book *The Crystal Skulls* for a discussion of recent breakthroughs in crystal technology.

Mercury is an element and a metal. According to the *Concise Columbia Encyclopedia,* mercury is a "metallic element, known to the ancient Chinese, Hindus, and Egyptians." The chief source of mercury is cinnabar HgS, a reddish mineral. According to *Van Nostrand's Scientific Encyclopedia,*[15] mercury was mined as early a 500 BC out of cinnabar crystals which are usually "small and often highly modified hexagonal crystals, usually of rhombohedral or tabular habit. Its name is supposed to be of Hindu origin."[15]

Mercury was most certainly mined and used earlier than 500 BC, and its use must go back many thousands of years. This liquid-metal is named after

the messenger of the Gods in Roman mythology. It is a heavy, silver-white liquid with the symbol Hg. The symbol for Mercury is derived from the Greek word Hydrargos meaning water-silver, or liquid gyro. It is a liquid at ordinary temperatures and expands and contracts evenly when heated or cooled. It conducts electricity and can be used in electronics.

When liquid metal mercury is heated by any means it gives forth a hot vapor that is deadly. It is dangerous to handle mercury as well, as small amounts may be absorbed through the skin. Mercury is basically poisonous to most lifeforms, and when distilled from cinnabar ore it should be handled carefully. Mercury is generally kept or confined in glass tubes or containers that are sealed, and is therefore harmless to the user.

Present day Mercury Vapor Turbine Engines use large quantities of mercury, but little renewal is required because of its closed circuit systems. Mercury and its vapor conduct electricity; its vapor is also a source of heat

for power usage. Mercury amplifies sound waves and doesn't lose timbre in quality. Ultrasonics can be used for dispersing a metallic catalyst such as mercury in a reaction vessel or a boiler. High-frequency sound waves produce bubbles in the liquid mercury. When the frequency of the bubbles grows to match that of the sound waves, the bubbles implode, releasing a sudden burst of heat.

This subject was researched heavily in the 1970s by Bill Clendenon, a well-known UFO investigator of the time and the author of the book *Mercury: UFO Messenger of the Gods*[16] and coauthor of *Atlantis and the Power System of the Gods*?[99] He concluded that a mercury-filled flywheel can be used for stabilization and propulsion in a discoid craft. Clendenon went on to say that a good name for these devices would be Liquid Mercury Proton Gyroscope. He said that these mercury gyros (electrified) can be used as direction-sensing gyros if placed 120 degrees apart on the rotating stabilizer flywheel of a discoid craft.

Liquid Mercury Proton Gyroscopes have several advantages, claims Clendenon. Firstly, the heavy protons found in mercury atoms are very stable. Secondly, such gyros do not require a warm-up period as mechanical gyros do. Thirdly, the gyro using stable mercury protons is not affected by vibrations and shock. Fourthly, the Liquid Mercury Proton Gyroscope has no moving parts and can run forever. And lastly, the mercury atom offers the most stable gyro device in nature and has the additional advantages of saving space and weight. This is particularly valuable on long distance flights where all space and weight must be very carefully calculated and conserved.[99]

Clendenon's version of mercury directional gyros is that three mercury gyros are mounted on and rotate with the rotating stabilizer flywheel of the discoid craft. The three sensing cells are rigidly attached 120 degrees apart on the rotating flywheel. The three movable coils of the sensing cells are

constantly moving in and out or back and forth each in turn as chosen by the computer when the craft flies on a straight course and is rotating. Signals will be generated by the three mercury proton gyros' resistance to the three coils' movements. The signals can then be measured by the computer to determine the speed and direction of the craft.

The Caduceus and Mercury Vortex Engines

Mercury, the Messenger of the Gods, carried with him his magic wand or caduceus, the winged staff with which he could perform many wondrous feats. In one form or another, the ancient symbol has appeared throughout the world, though its actual origin remains a mystery. The caduceus staff of the God Mercury (Hermes to the Greeks) was a rod entwined by two serpents and topped with a winged sphere.

Today the caduceus is used by the medical profession as its symbol, a practice that apparently began in the Middle Ages. Probably, the use of the caduceus as a medical symbol stems from the symbolism of the wings for speedy medical attention, and the entwined snakes as chemical or medical symbols, but the actual origin is a mystery.

Mercury was a messenger for the gods—he flew through the air rapidly bearing important tidings and official news from kings, gods, and sovereign powers. It was said that if the gods wanted to communicate, carry on commerce, or move things swiftly from one place to another over a long distance safely, they made use of their fellow god Mercury to swiftly accomplish these goals. Many Americans will be familiar with the "Mercury Dime" which featured a portrait of Mercury in a winged helmet with his caduceus.

Bill Clendenon's concept of a mercury vortex engine.

Indeed, it seems that the caduceus is an ancient symbol of "electromagnetic flight and cosmic energy," according to Clendenon. The entwined snakes are the vortex coils of the propellant, the rod the mercury boiler/starter/antenna and the wings symbolic of flight. His basic turbo-pump engine has four main sections: compressor, combustion (or heat chambers), turbo-pump and exhaust. Clendenon says that burning gases are exhausted through the turbo-pump wheel to generate power to turn the electric generator:

1. Propellant tanks will be filled with liquid air obtained directly from the atmosphere by on-board reduction equipment.

2. Liquid air may be injected into expansion chambers and heated by the metal working-fluid mercury confined in a boiler coupled to a heat exchanger.

3. The super heated magneto-hydrodynamic plasma (or air) will expand through propellant cooled nozzles.

4. The ship may recharge its propellant tanks with liquid air and condensate water collected directly from the upper atmosphere by the on-board reducing plant.

Clendenon's interpretation of the *Samarangana Sutradhara* is then as follows:

"Inside the circular air frame, place the mercury-engine with its electric/ultrasonic mercury boiler at the bottom center." —Inside the circular air-frame, place the mercury-engine with its electric/ultrasonic mercury boiler at the bottom center [Same instructions].

"By means of the power latent in the mercury which sets the driving whirlwind in motion a man sitting inside may travel a great distance in the sky in a most marvelous manner." —The unchained heat energy from the hot mercury vapor sets the air pump/turbine in motion.

"Four strong mercury containers must be built into the interior structure. When these have been heated by controlled fire from iron containers, the vimana develops thunder-power through the mercury. And at once it becomes like a pearl in the sky." —One mercury boiler and three mercury flux valve sensor units must be installed in the propulsion system within the center of the circular air frame. When these mercury containers have been heated by electrically-controlled fire (hot mercury vapor) from the containers, the aircraft develops ultrasonic power through the mercury. And at once, the ionized recirculating air flow becomes like a pearl in the sky because of magneto-hydrodynamic plasma (MHD-Plasma). [99]

Clendenon says that the glow around such a craft is the MHD-Plasma, a hot, continuously recirculating air flow through the ship's gas turbine that is ionized (electrically conducting). And he maintains that—at times—a shimmering mirage-like effect caused by heat, accompanied by pulsations of the ball of light, makes the craft appear to be alive and breathing. This has, at times, suggests Clendenon, made witnesses to certain UFOs think that they

were seeing a living thing. For some of the above reasons, the ship may seem to suddenly disappear from view, though it is actually still there and not dematerialized. The ionized bubble of air surrounding the UFO may be controlled by a computerized rheostat, so the ionization of the air may shift through every color of the spectrum obscuring the aircraft from view.

A number of authors, including John Walker in his article on vortex technology in *Anti-Gravity & the Unified Field,*[91] point out that a vortex is a gravity focal point. The very motion of rotating or spinning indicates an exchange is taking place between the center and the outside of the motion. Walker calls the anti-gravity effects of a whirling gyroscopic craft "gravity vortex mechanics" and goes on to say:

> If I were to build a ring or rotor based motion system, the most natural type of vessel to contain it in would be round like a common motor. If I were to design my rotor like a flat plate, naturally my containment vessel would be saucer or convex lens shaped. The fact that it is lens shaped also assists the whole craft to act as a focusing instrument. If you've ever seen a magnifying lens used to make a fire, the smoke allows you to see light streams pass through the lens to create a cone. Where the cone is smallest at its apex, that's the energy concentration point.
>
> Essentially the form of a saucer follows exactly its function to create a rotating potential-gravity vortex. It works with nature. The reason a disc craft would have more of a structure to it on the top side indicates room for pilot quarters and focal control coils, or in the case of remote craft, just the coils.
>
> If you just build a flat rotor that produced a rotating field, space would curve in toward the center and then it would curve back out again. However, if you added a couple of more coils above the rotor, the top one being smallest, now you are shaping the field. A good example for a

model would be a three-foot rotor, a two-foot coil above that, and your top coil is say, 9 inches in diameter. Now space curves in and is confined to smaller and smaller concentric rings. By the time it is leaving the top-side it is almost pointed. It is focused. Focusing coils are not a new concept I just thought of. If you know even the basics of television you would know that focus coils are utilized to pinpoint and direct the tube electron beam against the screen. The principles speak for themselves.[91]

So we may have one type of vimana that is essentially what we would call a flying saucer: a disk-shaped craft that is a bright light of spinning colors when seen from a distance. I am reminded of the description of the Pushpaka vimana in the *Ramayana* which "shown like the sun."

In his book *Timeless Earth,*[43] Italian archeologist and author Peter Kolosimo mentions this strange discovery by Russian scientists sometime in the 1960s:

In the caves of Turkestan and the Gobi Desert the Russians have discovered what may be age-old instruments used in navigating cosmic vehicles. These are hemispherical objects of glass or porcelain, ending in a cone with a drop of mercury inside. Science has no explanation for these, but it is remarkable that mercury played an important part in propelling the "heavenly chariots" which are so often described in Sanskrit texts. Acccoring to the *Ramayana* and *Dronaparva* (part of the *Mahabharata),* the aerial car (vimana) was shaped like a sphere and borne along at great speed on a mighty wind generated by mercury. It moved in any way the pilot might desire—up or down, forwards or backwards. Another Indian source, the *Samar,* speaks of "iron machines, well-knit and smooth, with a charge of mercury that shot out of the back in the form of a roaring flame," and another work, the *Samaranga Sutradhara,* actually actually

descibes how such vehicles were constructed.

> The great Sir Isaac Newton may have had an inkling, or more than an inkling, of such matters when he wrote, in a letter of 1676 on the transmutation of metals: "The way in which mercury may be so impregnated has been thought fit to be concealed by others that have known it, and therefore may possibly be an inlet to something more noble, not to be communicated without immense danger to the world, if there should be any verity in the Hermetic writers." At all events, it is interesting that the modern science of astronautics is turning its attention to mercury as a fuel. At an international space congress in Paris in 1959 there was talk of an "ionomercurial engine," and in 1966 the French were planning to launch an artificial satellite powered by a "mercury solar furnace" (the "Phaeton project"). [43]

This is all fascinating information, though Kolosimo only gives us tantalizing hints. Western Europeans, particularly the French and Italians, followed the Russian press and scientific journals of the 1950s and 60s and would report in the various supernatural books that came out in the early 70s about many of the little-known Soviet claims on archeology, geology and space studies. Unfortunately, detailed information, such as the date and name of the Soviet journals or reports would be missing. Such is the case with this quote from Kolosimo, and this discovery of the devices with drops of mercury in them, whatever they are, seems to be lost to history. They may turn up in some oddball museum in Kazakstan at some point—and maybe I'll see them there—but right now I cannot find out any more about this intriguing discovery.

As far as the "Phaeton project," when I search the web on this subject, not much comes up. There was a NASA-JPL project with name Phaeton, though it seems to be something completely different. Phaeton was the son of

Helios, the sun god, and is sometimes the personifcation of Jupiter. Also, the exploded planet between Mars and Jupiter—today's asteroid belt—has been called Phaeton in a number of books, including science fiction books.

While the phantom Phaeton project has faded into obscurity, when one looks for "iono-mercury thruster or engine" one finds out that these things are very real, and currently used in space propulsion. Encyclopedias, including Wikipedia, say that ion thrusters are a form of electric propulsion or space propulsion that use accelerated ions to create thrust. Such ion thrusters are used in spacecraft today, and many ion thruster proponents think that they provide an ideal way to travel through space. Early versions of ion thrusters did use mercury, but because of the toxic nature of mercury other elements were deemed better suited.

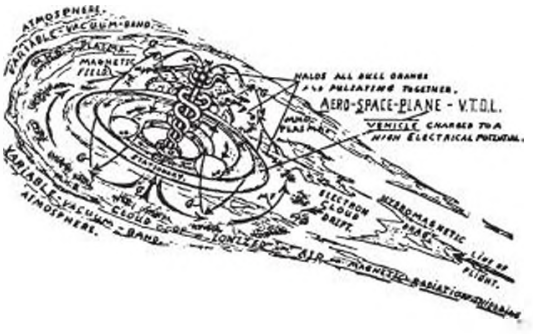
Today, the most advanced ion thrusters are magnetoplasmadynamic and are often combined with a Lithium Lorentz Force Accelerator (LiLFA) to create a powerful ion thruster. Other similar thrusters are the Helicon Double Layer Thruster and Pulsed Inductive Thrusters. A discussion of these devices would be highly technical, but feel free to pursue research into these now-common spacedrive devices on the Internet. I have been told that the US Navy is currently building three ion thruster spaceships—in space!

Ion thrusters seems to be most useful in space, beyond the strong gravitational pull of a planet or large moon. Therefore, they are best suited for travel between planets. Current space programs in the US and other countries are planning ion-thruster journeys to Mars and other planets. Some have already been launched. It may be that mercury-ion-thruster drives were used at the time of the *Ramayana* if the Rama Empire was visiting (and in control of) other planets in our solar system, as the ancient Hindu texts say.

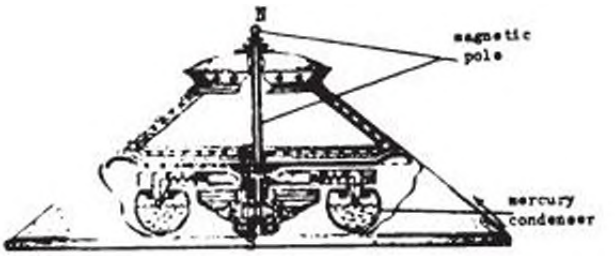
But, if the vimanas that were flying around northern India, the Himalayas and mysterious Lanka were powered by some sort of mercury drive, then it was probably a closed-circuit mercury-gyro engine. These mercury gyros are

also magnetoplasmadynamic when they are electrified, and the electric field creates a magnetic field. With this electrified gas spun in a toroidal-vortex manner that is gyroscopic, one creates a mercury-plasma gyro, a brightly lit swirling plasma of gravity-defying energy trapped inside a glass globe or metallic globe-fixture. Something like this was apparently the concept of the Foo Fighters of WWII, which were described as pulsating and glowing glass balls that hovered in the air, and disrupted the electrical systems of RAF and US Airforce planes. According to numerous studies, this effect could power a spherical, cylendrical, triangular or disk-shaped craft. A typical such craft with a mercury-plasma gyro engine might look like a flying saucer and would probably have very bright lights associated with it—as do many UFOs in modern reports.

This whole discussion of breaking technologies being linked to ancient texts underlines to me that we are, indeed, going "back to the future." Real, mechanical flying machines, called vimanas, existed in ancient times, and we are only now discovering their secrets.



Bill Clendenon's concept of a mercury vortex engine.



Bill Clendenon's concept of a mercury vortex engine.

Mercury, the messenger god who flys through the air

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SECRET FORTRESSES

An aerial chariot, the Pushpaka vimana, conveys many people to the capital of Ayodhya. The sky is full of stupendous flying-machines, dark as night, but picked out by lights with a yellowish glare.

— *The Mahavira of Bhavabhuti*

All are architects of fate, Working in these walls of time: Some with massive deeds and great; Some with lesser rhyme.

—Longfellow, *The Builders*

There is speculation, given to us in Hindu and Jain sources—and also ancient Chinese texts—that the builders and operators of the ancient vimanas created special underground and inside-mountain super fortresses in ancient times, and presumably their ancestors continue to operate them today. These are the secret mountain fortresses, presumably in various areas of Tibet, Mongolia, China, India and other Himalayan countries. While the area of northern Tibet around the Kunlun Mountains has been specifically named in Chinese texts, as we will shortly see, there are other areas of Central Asia that are known for vimana activity. Indeed, vimana activity in the present day would be identical to UFO activity—and that is a fascinating concept in light of today's reports from China, India and the Himalayas.

In ancient Asian texts, including Hindu, Sumerian and Chinese writings, certain mountains are associated with gods and similarly with the chariots of the gods—vimanas—and we might wonder if some of these mountains contain some sort of secret fortress or vimana base that was constructed many thousands of years ago using advanced technology, something

similar to the NORAD command center inside Cheyenne Mountain just west of Colorado Springs, Colorado, which was constructed in the 1960s by the US military and is essentially a high-tech military base built inside of a mountain. Did ancient civilizations—or extraterrestrials—construct similar such edifices in the distant past that are now the stuff of legend? Mount Shasta in northern California is another mountain which has a considerable lore built around it concerning it having a "city" and a "spaceport" inside it. Certain mountains on the eastern side of Lake Titicaca in South America have similar legends concerning them. Do secret fortresses—built inside mountains—exist all over the world today, from Tibet and the Americas to Pacific Islands?

The Secret Fortresses inside Mountains Around the World

Books like the *Vimana-Vastu* maintain that Bodhisatva-Masters have secret fortresses inside mountains where they keep their still-functioning vimanas. Modern literature, both Hindu and European, pinpoint such mountains as Mount Kailash, Mount Meru, Mount Shasta, Mount Olympus and Gauri Shankar. The glaciated peak of Mount Shasta in northern California has been the subject of numerous books and articles starting in the late 1800s concerning it having some sort of city inside it, as well as some sort of UFO parking lot. Numerous accounts of robed "Masters" with a gentle demeanor have surfaced, and witnesses to UFO activity on the mountain include local police officers; Mount Shasta is known as a UFO hotspot. If there are UFOs at Mount Shasta, apparently being parked inside the mountain, is it possible that they are vimanas— literally leftovers from ancient times still in use today?

If Mount Shasta is some sort of "Lemurian" vimana-port, would we find such ancient vimana ports in other mountainous areas of the planet, like Tibet and South America? It would seem very likely! There are numerous

areas in South America that have been identified as UFO hotspots, including the area around Lake Titicaca. There are also stories of megalithic underwater ruins in Lake Titicaca (see my book *Ancient Technology in Peru and Bolivia)*.

There are reports of UFOs around the central mountains of Guadacanal in the Solomon Islands. The Battle of the Coral Sea was fought here during WWII and UFOs were seen during the conflict. Another Pacific island that may have been a vimana base is Rapa Nui, known as Easter Island, with it's giant heads and the megalithic platform called *vinapu*.

The Hindu texts make certain references to special mountains in Tibet and the Himalayas—and as we shall see, the Trans-Himalaya of western Mongolia—so we might presume that some of them might have been vimana-ports. Some of them may still be. Certain special mountains, some forbidden to be climbed, stand out—such as Mount Kailash in Tibet, and other mountains in the Himalayas such as Mount Kanjenjunga and Gauri Shankar. Let us look at Mount Kailash first.

Mount Kailash lies near Rishikesh, India at the head of the Ganges River, but is actually a Trans-Himalayan mountain in southwestern Tibet, just north of the Himalayan peaks. It is a very striking mountain that basically stands by itself, with the main range of the Himalayas visible to the immediate south. It looks very much like a pointed four-sided pyramid of solid, eternal rock. One description in the *Vishnu Purana* says that the four faces of the "pyramid" are crystal, ruby, gold, and lapis lazuli. It is a pillar of the world and is located at the heart of six mountain ranges symbolizing a lotus.

The huge mountain also seems to have a gigantic swastika of rock on its eastern side, often highlighted by the snowpack, that is deemed very important and auspicious(The swastika is an ancient Asian symbol that was purloined and perverted by the Nazis). The Hindu god Shankar (also called

Shiva) is said to live on top of—or inside—this amazing mountain. Thousands of pilgrims go to Mount Kailash every year, though the flow of these pilgrims has been somewhat stymied over the last half century by Chinese authorities.

The mountain is sacred in the religions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Bon and Jainism. At the foot of the eastern side of the mountain are two lakes that are said to represent the sun and moon, Lake Manasarowar and Lake Rakshastal. In all these religions Shiva is recognized as part of the Hindu trinity, a the destroyer of all things— of ignorance, of planets, of humans and all of civilization, if deemed necessary by the god. It may be that Shiva the Destroyer resides inside Mount Kailash because it was a vimana base during the wars of the *Ramayana* and Kurushetra *(Mahabharata)*. It is an amazing thought!

Shankar resides there with his wife Parvati, basically in perpetual meditation and according to the *Ramayana,* the bad guy, Ravana, was a devotee of Shiva. He attempted to steal a temple from Mount Kailash to bring to his sick mother to heal her. Shiva stopped Ravana from doing this, but was impressed by him and gave him the gift of immortality—though Rama ultimately did kill Ravana. What bizarre role in these ancient wars did Mount Kailash hold? Was it some sort of vimana-port, an impregnable mountain hangar?

In Jain cosmology of western India a certain mountain called Ashtapada is of great importance. In Jain histories, Ashtapada is the where the first Jain avatar (tirthankara), named Rishabhadeva, attained what the Jains call Nirvana/moksa (liberation or enlightenment).

Just where Ashtapada is located is not known. While some historians think that the mountains around Ashtapada are those of the Kailas Range, other Jain historians in India think that Ashtapada was in another area of the Himalayas, such as around Nandi Parvat, which is near Mount Kailash.

Considering the many stories of the wars and vimanas, that are also part of Jain history, mountains around Nanga Parvat might be investigated as possible ancient vimana-ports. A report in the *Ahmedabad Mirror* (November 30, 2009, found online) said that the Ashtapad Research Foundation was paying for research and expeditions into various areas of the Himalayas in search of the authentic location of the legendary mountain called Ashtapada.

Mountains identified around Nandi Parvat that might be Ashtapada included the peaks called Dharma King Norsang, Drengung Chorten, Nandi, Ashtapad, and Shiv Sthal. All of these mountains might be part of some tunneled-out base in the Himalayas—created thousands of years ago—that will one day be discovered by the Indian or Chinese government.

Strange stories are told of the Kanjenjunga massif, the highest peak of which is the third-highest mountain in the world. This mountain massif lies between Tibet, Nepal and Sikkim, now a state of India. The area is something of a border area between Tibet and India and strange phenomena have been reported here for centuries. The Theosophical Society, headed by Helena Blavatsky, mentioned it continually in its literature as a secret place of the Masters. Similarly, Theosophical student of the Point Loma Theosophical group Talbot Mundy wrote about underground tunnels under Kanjenjunga and the Brahmaputra River in his book *Om: The Secret of Abhor Valley.*

Kanjenjunga is also an area of notable yeti activity, and yetis are sometimes called Kanjenjunga Demons in that area. The mountain massif covers a considerable area and includes nearly every climatic type on Earth: freezing mountain glacier; scorching Tibetan desert; lush jungle growth in the deep Arun River Valley; and various transition zones. This area may hold some sort of vimana base, and Mount Everest, nearby to the west, is also an area of ancient gods and possible vimana bases.

Also in this area is the mysterious mountain known as Gauri Shankar. This high Himalayan peak is forbidden to be climbed by the Nepalese government, and is said to be inhabited by Shankar (Shiva) like Mount Kailash. Gauri Shankar is in the Rowaling Himalaya, west of Mount Everest; this region is still a remote one and rarely visited by foreign trekkers, even today.

There is some confusion in Hinduism and Buddhism about Shiva and Shankar. Many Hindus feel that they are the same god that is part of the Hindu trinity of Vishna, Brahma and Shiva. However, other groups maintain that Shiva and Shankar are not the same. Shankar is part of the trinity and Shiva is actually the Godhead that is one, the One God that is the Seventh Wave—the god of Buddhism, Christianity, Taoism and other religions. Therefore, Gauri Shankar is the sacred mountain of Shankar and Mount Kailash is the sacred mountain of Shiva. Both may be hollowed-out mountains, home of the masters and their vimana-ports!

§§§

Hsi Wang Mu & the Land of the Immortals

Vimanas and gods or masters flying around western China and Tibet are common themes in Asian literature. They are often going to a fantasic place in the Kunlun Mountains called Hsi Wang Mu. Circa 300 BC, the Chinese poet Chu Yuan wrote of his flight in a jade chariot (vimana) at a high altitude over the Gobi Desert toward the snow-capped Kunlun Mountains in the west. Says author Andrew Tomas, "He accurately described how the aircraft was unaffected by the winds and dust of the Gobi, and how he conducted an aerial survey."[24]

The great Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, often talked of the "Ancient Ones" in his writings, much as Confucius did. They were wise and knowledgeable human beings that were as gods— powerful, good, loving and

all-knowing. Born around 604 BC, Lao Tzu wrote the book which is still perhaps the most famous Chinese classic of all time, the *Tao Te Ching*. When he finally left China, at the close of his very long life, he journeyed to the west, to the legendary land of Hsi Wang Mu, which may have been the headquarters of the "Ancient Ones," the Great White Brotherhood. It was as he was leaving, at one of the border posts of China, that a guard persuaded him to write down the *Tao Te Ching* so that Lao Tzu's wisdom would not be lost. No one ever heard of Lao Tzu again, and it is presumed that he made it to the Land of Hsi Wang Mu.

Hsi Wang Mu is another name for the popular Chinese Goddess Kuan Yin, the "Merciful Guardian." According to *The Shambhala Dictionary of Taoism*,[101] Hsi Wang-Mu is defined as:

> "Royal Mother of the West," a Taoist figure who "rules over the western paradise of the Immortals in the K'un-lun Mountains. As the ruler of the Immortals (hsien) she is portrayed as a young beautiful woman wearing a royal gown, sometimes also riding on a peacock. She lives in a nine-storied palace of jade, which is surrounded by a wall over a thousand miles long and of pure gold. The male Immortals reside in the right wing of this palace, the female Immortals in the left wing.
>
> In her garden Hsi Wang-mu cultivates the peach of immortality; whoever partakes of this fruit is no longer subject to death. However, her miraculous peach tree forms only one peach every three thousand years, which then takes a further three thousand years to ripen. When it is ripe, the Royal Mother of the West invites all the Immortals to a feast to celebrate their birthday and to partake of the miraculous peach, which bestows another lease of immortality. The feast has often been described in Chinese literature.[101]

In *Myths and Legends of China*[234] a collection published in 1922, Hsi Wang Mu is connected to a lost continent:

> Hsi Wang Mu was formed of the pure quintessence of the Western Air, in the legendary continent of Shen Chou. ...As Mu Kung, formed of the Eastern Air, is the active principle of the male air and sovereign of the Eastern Air, so Hsi Wang Mu, born of the Western Air, is the passive or female principle (yin) and sovereign of the Western Air. These two principles, co-operating, engender Heaven and earth and all the beings of the universe, and thus become the two principles of life and of the subsistence of all that exists. She is the head of the troop of genii dwelling on the K'un-lun Mountains (the Taoist equivalent of the Buddhist Sumeru), and from time to time holds intercourse with favored imperial votaries.
>
> Hsi Wang Mu's palace is situated in the high mountains of the snowy K'un-lun. It is 100 *li* (about 333 miles) in circuit; a rampart of massive gold surrounds its battlements of precious stones. Its right wing rises on the edge of the Kingfishers' River. It is the usual abode of the *Immortals,* who are divided into seven special categories according to the color of their garments—red, blue, black, violet, yellow, green, and 'nature color.' There is a marvelous fountain built of precious stones, where the periodical banquet of the Immortals is held. This feast is called P'an-t'ao Hui, 'the feast of the Peaches.' It takes place on the borders of Yao Ch'ih, Lake of Gems, and is attended by both male and female Immortals.[134]

In *The Shambhala Dictionary of Taoism,* we learn that the Kunlun (K'un-lun) is:

> ... a mountain range in Western China, glorified as Taoist paradise. The K'un-lun—one of the ten continents and three islands in Taoist

cosmology—is said to be three (or nine, according to some texts) stories high. Whoever is capable of ascending to its top gains access to the heavens. The K'un-lun furthermore extends three (or nine) stories below the Earth, thereby connecting the subterranean watery realm—the dwelling place of the dead—with the realm of the gods. In the K'un-lun the Royal Mother of the West grows the peaches of immortality, which Taoists have again and again set out to discover in countless expeditions.

The dictionary goes on to say, "According to tradition the first to visit this paradise was King Mu of Chou, who there discovered a palace of the Yellow Emperor (Huang-ti) and erected a stone memorial. He was then received by the Royal Mother of the West.[101]

In *Shambala: Oasis of Light,* Andrew Tomas relates that, in the Chin Dynasty (265-420 AD), the Emperor Wu-ti ordered the scholar Hsu to edit some bamboo books found in the tomb of an ancient king named Ling-Wang. The books recorded the travels of the Chou Dynasty emperor Mu (1001-946 BC) who journeyed to the Kunlun Mountains to pay a visit to the Royal Mother of the West. The emperor met with Hsi Wang Mu on the auspicious day *chia-tzu* on the bank of Jasper Lake in the range. She blessed him and sang for him, and the emperor promised to return in three years after bringing peace and prosperity to his millions of subjects. He then had rocks engraved as a record of his visit and departed eastward across the desert back to his kingdom.[103]

The Shambhala Dictionary of Taoism contains an interesting note on the Kunlun: ".One may also attain immortality by climbing the first and lowest of the three mountains of K'un-lun— the mountain called Cool Breeze. Whoever reaches the top of the second mountain, called Hanging Garden and twice as high as the first, will become a spirit capable of magic and of commanding wind and rain. Those who climb the third and highest

mountain... can step from its peak directly into Heaven and become a spirit of the gods, because they have reached the palace of the Supreme Celestial Emperor."[101]

It is interesting to wonder if any of these mountains—Cool Breeze or Hanging Garden or the third—could be connected with the mysterious mountain that we will discull next, covered—by Henning Haslund in his book *Men and Gods in Mongolia*.[102] There is certainly a strong common theme in these stories of ancient lakes and paradisiacal cities located high in the vicinity of the Altai.

§§§

For this they [scoffers] willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.

—II Peter 3:5, 6

The White Island of the Gobi Desert

The original inhabitants of Mongolia and the steppes around the Gobi Desert are thought to have been Uigers, a Turkish people, often with red hair and blue eyes. These ancient Uigers made inscriptions in a kind of runic script that has no relation to modern Mongolian. The earliest known inscriptions are runes that are carved on menhirs in western Mongolia.

"Gobi" is the Mongolian word for any broad expanse of semi-barren country, and the area now known as the Gobi Desert is a true desert area thinly covered with gravel and sand. There is a scant covering of grass and scrub brush, but very little water. The Gobi does, however, support quite a few wild animals. The desert is known for its fierce sandstorms, cold nights, and blistering summer days. In winter, even the days are cold. Temperatures

range from highs of 122 degrees Fahrenheit in July to lows of minus 40 degrees in January. What created the sands of the Gobi is something of a mystery. The area was covered by ocean in the Permian Period (280 million years ago), but the exact process of its drying to desert is unknown. Perhaps the area was affected by a great flood/cataclysm, or perhaps most of the Gobi became an inland sea for some time. Both theories are supported by various sources, although it seems fairly certain that the Gobi, much like the Sahara, was fertile and inhabited at a time in the not-so-distant past.

Central Asia has often been the focus of historians, for many things, including the Caucasian race and most European dialects appear to stem from that region. Also, there are stories of a mysterious city or fortress—perhaps inside a mountain—that was home to a group of very wise men and women who had wonderful sciences and magical technology. This is similar to theories surrounding the mystical peak of Mount Shasta in northern California today— was there a Mount Shasta-like city in the Gobi Desert? Someplace like the semi-mythical places of Mount Meru, Mount Kailash and Shambala?

According to the Hindu *Kurma Purana,* an island called Swetadvepa, or White Island, lay in the northern sea, the paradisiacal homeland of great yogis possessed of supreme wisdom and learning. According to author Andrew Tomas,[3] the Gobi Desert is the bottom of this inland sea that once existed in western China and Mongolia, and the island was the top of what is now a cluster of high mountains rearing up from the barren desert floor.

Tomas tells the story of the Russian explorer N. M. Prjevalsky, who in the late 1800s recounted an old Mongolian legend concerning an ancient island that was a paradise: "Another very, very interesting tale concerns Shambhaling—an island lying far away in the northern sea. Gold abounds in it [as it does in the Altai Himalaya of western Mongolia], wheat grows to an enormous height there. Poverty is unknown in that country; in fact Shambhaling

flows with milk and honey."

As has been noted, the world of Central Asia and the Gobi Desert was much different in the past than it is today. The great inland sea must have drained to the north and east during some cataclysmic shift of the Earth's tectonic plates. The sea floor became the windblown desert that exists today, and the islands that had existed in this great sea have become uninterrupted mountain chains and isolated groups of peaks. This would seem to be the reverse of the process that produced the Mediterranean Sea of today—there, at least 200 known cities are submerged on the undulating sea floor, which must have in the past been above water.

Of note are the mysterious deep lakes of Lake Baikal just north of Mongolia in Siberia, and its sister lake, Khovsgol Nuur, on the Mongolian-Russian border just to the south and west of Baikal. Lake Baikal, though thousands of miles from the ocean, has a large seal population. How these seals got to Lake Baikal is not known by biologists. It is thought that the seals must have migrated to Lake Baikal at some time in the distant past. There must have been some connection to the outer ocean at some time, such as a huge inland sea where the Gobi Desert is now, surrounding the Altai Himalaya and encompassing areas of central Mongolia.

Author Victoria LePage in her book *Shambhala*[116] argues that the Altai Himalaya area is the repository of Shambhala and the ancient White Island, or Island of Shambhaling.

LePage identifies Shambhala with the legendary Mount Meru, which she believes is somewhere in the Altai Mountains, possibly the high mountain called Mount Belukha. Says LePage:

> Within the magic ring of myth the cosmic mountain is preeminent, both for its universality and its spiritual resonance. As the meeting-place of heaven, earth, and hell and the axle of the revolving firmament, it has

figured in the mythology of nearly every race on earth and has been revered even in lands where there are no mountains. It is always pictured as the Axis Mundi and as bearing the habitats of sages, saints or gods upon its sides, as four-sided or six-sided and eighty miles high, with the heavens rotating about its peak and the pole star shining above. It is said by all accounts to be so high that it pierces the firmament, while its roots descend into the abyss beneath the earth where chaos reigns. It has seven levels, believed by some races to be nine, and these correspond to the seven or nine inner worlds and also to the ascending stations of consciousness traversed by the initiate on his purgatorial pilgrimage to heaven.[116]

The ancient land sacred to the Hindus was the White Island says LePage:

To the early Hindus, Mount Meru was the apotheosis of this causal principle. From Central Asia they brought into India the legend of a paradisiacal mountain to the north which, as the *Mahabharata* declares, 'stands carrying the worlds above, below and transversely,' and which Hindus believe to this day is the prototype of all other mythic mountains. This northern mountain was inhabited by seven great Rishis who appeared in the world whenever a new spiritual revelation was required. Eliade catches the inner meaning of the legend when he states that the cosmic mountain symbolizes the highest pinnacle of mystical exaltation, of enlightenment. Hence in antiquity, he says, every religious center partook of the meaning of the sacred mountain: the temple was the highest point of the land, the center of the world, the gateway to revelation, to prophecy, to heavenly gifts and to the human laws received from the gods. Where there was no mountain the people built one; a mound, a pyramid, a ziggurat.[116]

§§§

Atlantis in Mongolia

The French author Robert Charroux is one of the few writers on mysteries of the past who touches on the enigmas of the Gobi Desert and Mongolia. In *The Mysterious Unknown*[105] he discusses the French Astronomer Royal, Jean Sylvain Bailly, mayor of Paris in 1779, who wrote a book on the history of ancient astronomy which was published in 1781. One-third of the book was devoted to ancient India and surrounding areas and described the scientific discoveries of a Northern people who no longer existed on the earth.

Bailly based his work upon the "Tables of Tirvalour" and documents brought back from India by missionaries, and eventually concluded that there must have been a very highly developed antediluvian civilization which had been "obliterated as a result of natural and political upheavals."

In checking the Indian astronomical tables, Bailly found that they contained mistakes, if one took them to have been worked out in India. On the other hand, if the author had been sited somewhere near the 49th degree latitude north, they appeared to be correct.

Charroux says that Bailly "inferred from this that the Brahmans, in whose possession they had been, must have inherited them from a people living in the Gobi Desert, whom he called Atlantean." Charroux goes on to call this lost civilization "Atlantis in Mongolia," though he admits to the belief that Atlantis was somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean. The Gobi Desert and western Mongolia are more to be associated with, he says, the White Island and Meru/Shambhala.

There seems to be a wealth of strange and ancient roads and other structures in western Mongolia that are not easily accounted for in normal historical records. In the book *Unknown Mongolia,*[106] a two-volume set published

by Hutchinson & Company in London in 1913, the author describes a mysterious old road that he discovered in the Altai Himalaya. Written by Douglas Carruthers, a "Gold Medalist of the Royal Geographical Society," and subtitled "A Record of Travel and Exploration in North-West Mongolia and Dzungaria," *Unknown Mongolia* is a very rare book, and I was fortunate to obtain a facsimile reprint from my friends at the Pilgrims Book House in Kathmandu.

In *Volume One,* page 114, Carruthers says,

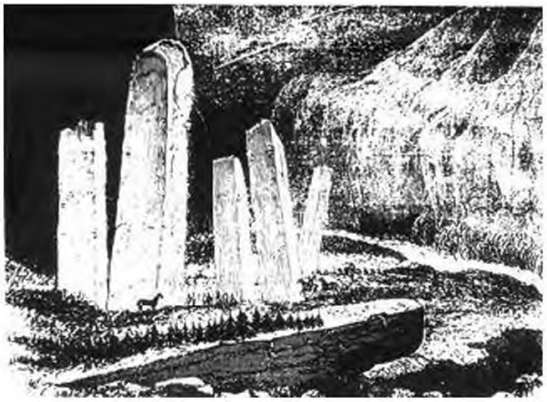
> Between the Cha-Kul Valley and the Kemchik River we found a well-built high-road, six yards in width, raised above the level of the surrounding steppe and having a ditch on either side. The surface was as smooth and well-metaled as an English high-road. Passing caravans, which generally make a row of deep parallel grooves caused by the horses or camels following each other in single file, here had made no impression on the surface. It ran with Roman directness between the two points here mentioned— distance of about fifty miles! It appeared incredible to us that any volume of trade could necessitate the building up of so formidable a route. Its object remains inexplicable. The area it crosses needs no road-building to make transport possible. The ground is hard, smooth steppe, suitable to every kind of traffic; therefore road-making seems to be a labor-wasting folly. Were the country soft, wet marshland or damp forest, there might have been some reason for the arduous labor this work must have entailed. All we can infer from its presence is that once this region must have been of greater importance, many more caravans must have been in the custom of using the route, and a greater amount of communication must have existed between Mongolia and Siberia.[106]

This curiously "unused" ancient road may be linked to some sort of lost

world of western Mongolia that is associated with the ancient inland sea of the Gobi and the White Island. According to Carruthers, the caravans of his day show made little use of this ancient well-made road, but he suggest it must have been more heavily traveled in the past. Since these caravans have been moving for thousands of years, there is evidence to suggest that this road is many thousands of years old. Perhaps it was meant for traffic that is different from camel caravan traffic. Today, Russian and Chinese jeeps drive the ancient—now modernized—roads of western Mongolia. This road apparently went to some location that has now disappeared, perhaps an ancient port, or to a mountaintop city on a large island or peninsula in the Gobi Sea.

This road and other ancient ruins in western Mongolia and China may be related to the mysterious standing stones known as the "Tombs of the Genii." These massive stone menhirs were located in Siberia, and are possibly the largest megaliths ever discovered. Now seemingly lost, these monstrous megaliths were located on the Kora River in what was Soviet Turkestan and were depicted in the 1876 book *The Early Dawn of Civilization* (Victoria Institute Journal of Transactions).

They appear to be menhirs, much like giant obelisks, rough-hewn, and placed in the ground by some unknown effort. Either a gigantic waste of time, or leftovers of a technology that predates our own. These standing stones are so huge that they must still be standing today, though modern photos of these megaliths are currently unknown.



The Tombs of the Genii in Siberia, gigantically huge menhirs.

§§§

Men and Gods in Mongolia

The British publisher Kegan Paul of London published two curious books on Mongolia in the 1930s, *In Secret Mongolia* (originally titled *Tents in Mongolia)* (1934) and *Men and Gods in Mongolia* (1935). The books were written by Henning Haslund, a Danish explorer who accompanied Sven Hedin and other explorers into Mongolia and Central Asia in the 1920s and 30s. In these exciting books, Haslund takes us into the barely known world of Mongolia of 1921, a land of god-kings, bandits, vast mountain wilderness and a Russian army running amok. As Jennifer and I made our way to Ulan Batur on the Trans Siberian Express from Beijing some years back, I relaxed in the upper berth reading *In Secret Mongolia*. Haslund amazed me; he was a resourceful, adventurous person, with a cheery attitude that seemed indomitable.

Starting in Peking, Haslund journeyed to Mongolia as part of the Krebs Expedition—a mission to establish a Danish butter farm in a remote corner

of northern Mongolia. Along the way, he smuggled guns and nitroglycerin, got thrown into a prison by the new Communist regime, battled various Robber Princes and more. Haslund met the "Mad Baron" Ungern-Sternberg and his renegade Russian army, the many characters of Urga's fledgling foreign community, and the last god-king of Mongolia, Seng Chen Gegen, the fifth reincarnation of the Tiger god and the "ruler of all Torguts." It is an exciting and factual book.

Aside from the esoteric and mystical material, there is plenty of just plain adventure. Haslund encounters a Mongolian werewolf, is ambushed along the trail, escapes from prison and fights terrifying blizzards—but all in good humor, which makes us wonder at the amazing character of this intrepid adventurer. With Haslund, I witnessed initiation into Shamanic societies, met reincarnated warlords, and experienced the violent birth of "modern" Mongolia. I finished this first book and eagerly dug into the second.

In the 1935 sequel, *Men and Gods in Mongolia,* Haslund continues his adventures, taking us to the lost city of Karakota in the Gobi Desert where we meet Dambin Jansang, the dreaded warlord of the forbidden expanse of desert known as the Black Gobi. There is even material in this incredible book on the Hi-mori, an "airhorse" that flies through the sky and carries with it the sacred stone of Chintamani (more on that later). The cover of the book features an amazing photo of a famous Mongolian giant, said to have been 8-1/2 feet tall, standing beside a Russian of normal height. The Mongols are certainly a tall people, perhaps the tallest of the Orientals, though this Mongol was definitely of unusual height.

A Mountaintop Mystery

Haslund includes a very curious story in *Men and Gods in Mongolia* that may be helpful in the search for the secret fortresses of the ancients—military bases, kept for thousands of years and staffed by men and women,

that include vimanas and underground or inside-mountain hangars. Hiding military installations is exactly what is done today by governments that prefer to keep their fighter squadrons in underground hangers that are virtually invisible. A modern jet can take off from one of these hangers in a matter of minutes while the source of the craft, including the runways, remains hidden from view. Just like today, did ancient cultures hollow out mountains and create self-sufficient survival centers?

Haslund, toward the end of his second book, discusses his meetings with the *Toin Lama,* who was the senior Buddhist Lama for the region of far western Mongolia and Sinkiang. Haslund tells us that this elderly lama was fascinated by aeroplanes and air travel and asked him many questions about the subject.

Says Haslund:

> It was illustrated papers that were to open the way to the first intimacy between *Toin Lama* and me. He was the most eager of all my auditors, and every evening we went in detail through the pictures in a year-old weekly paper with all the matter for discussion to which each picture gave rise.
>
> The number containing Charles Lindbergh's Atlantic flight lasted three evenings, and I wonder whether the exploit of that blond scion of Scandinavia with the monstrous *nisdeg telleg,* "ether-carriage," anywhere produced more astonishment and delight than among the Torguts of "the Mountains of Heaven."
>
> The marvelous news of man's ability to follow the flight of the bird gave birth to a plan for the future in the primitive but progress-loving mind of *Toin Lama*. Of course it would be only a question of time before the Torguts would have their own "ether carriages" and with their aid one of the country's greatest riddles would be solved.

Deep within the mountains rises a sky-piercing peak with steep sides and topped by an irregular plateau like a gigantic watchtower. The bare gray precipices of the mountain are clothed at the top with pallid glaciers, and it needs courage to attempt to climb it. Yet the mountain has been climbed by two hunters of a former generation. They reached the top of the alpine tower and came back with an account of what they had seen. Those two hunters are dead long since, but the account of their wonderful experience survives and has tempted many a hunter of later times to the same climb, but none has been able to accomplish it. For terrifying sounds were heard from the sides of the mountain, and long before they reached the top they were seized with confusion of thought. Many have been entirely lost, but others have been found later at the foot of the mountain with no memory of what had happened after their minds were clouded and no knowledge of how they came down from the heights.

But the sight that the two hunters saw was worth the hardships of the climb, for up there was a paradise for Mongols. High up, the mountain-sides ended in a mighty circular crater the slopes of which were covered with luxuriant vegetation. Through the green alpine meadows flowed foaming rivers, and on the slopes fat sheep and goats were grazing and multitudes of game. Deep down in the crater valley lay a blue lake on whose fertile banks and surrounding steppes cattle grazed in countless multitudes. White tents were scattered over the steppe and from their smoke-vents the heat of fires trembled in the pure air. But no human beings were to be seen. The tents stood uninhabited, the horses played in unsaddled freedom and nature smiled in secure blessedness.

This strange story of a secret city on top of a mountain may be pure legend, but what legend is not based on something real? Was this possibly a secret vimana base? A mirage on the summit of a mountain? Could there be

some lost paradise on top of a mountain in the Altai Himalaya? Haslund did not give this mountain a name, but it is apparently in western China, the Pamirs, or the Altai Himalaya. It sounds remarkably like the Land of the Immortals, Hsi Wang Mu.

Nicholas Roerich and the Altai Himalaya

The famous Russian-American artist, explorer, archeologist and author Nicholas Roerich was born near Moscow in 1874. Roerich was one of the most famous painters of his time and authored several best-selling books including *Shambhala* (1930)[119] and *Altai Himalaya* (1929).[90] He studied at the Moscow Art Theater and Diaghilev Ballet for some years and then led a series of well-financed expeditions, lasting for over five years, into Mongolia, western China and Tibet. As we mentioned in Chapter Four, he reported seeing a UFO in 1926 in a remote area of northern China.[90]

After a number of overland trips to India and Central Asia, Roerich exhibited his paintings in New York with great success, and the Roerich Museum (NY) was founded in his honor in 1921. Another already existed in Moscow, and still exists to this day, making Roerich perhaps the only artist-archeologist who has two museums dedicated to him. When in New York or Moscow, I highly recommend visiting the Roerich museums; they are both well worthwhile, and easily found in any directory. While the New York Roerich Museum is better funded and well stocked, the Moscow Roerich Museum contains some of Roerich's more unusual paintings and belongings, including several gigantic crystals of translucent quartz, apparently collected somewhere in Central Asia. Roerich died in New York City in 1947.

Roerich's *Altai Himalaya* is a classic 1929 mystical travel book. The explorer's expedition through Sinkiang, Altai-Mongolia and Tibet from 1924 to 1928 is chronicled in 12 chapters, featuring reproductions of his inspiring paintings. Roerich's "travel diary" style encompasses discussions of various

mysteries and mystical arts of Central Asia, including such arcane topics as the hidden cities of Shambala and Agartha among others. Roerich is recognized as one of the great artists of the 20th century and the book is richly illustrated with his original drawings.

Roerich was keenly interested in the legends of secret cities in Central Asia, hidden abodes of the Masters, and the phantom power of the Gobi. Just south of the Altai Mountains, in Sinkiang, the famous explorer and mystic heard of the "Valley of the Immortals" just over the mountains. In his 1930 book *Heart of Asia*[26] he wrote, "Behind that mountain live holy men who are saving humanity through wisdom; many tried to see them but failed—somehow as soon as they go over the ridge, they lose their way." A native guide told him of huge vaults inside the mountains where treasures had been stored from the beginning of history. He also indicated that tall white people had been disappearing into those rock galleries.[126]

On his expeditions, Roerich apparently carried with him a large, very transparent quartz crystal (now in the Moscow museum), and at one time was in possession of a fragment of "a magical stone from another world," called in Sanskrit the Chintamani Stone. Alleged to come from the star system Sirius, ancient Asian chronicles claim that a divine messenger from the heavens gave a fragment of the stone to Emperor Tazlavoo of Atlantis.[127] According to a legend heard by Roerich, the stone was sent from Tibet to King Solomon in Jerusalem who split the stone and made a ring out of one of the pieces.

The stone is believed by some researchers to be moldavite, a magnetic stone sold in crystal shops, said to have fallen to earth in a meteor shower 14.8 million years ago. Moldavite is said to be a spiritual accelerator and has achieved a certain popularity in recent years. It is entirely possible that the Chintamani stone is a special piece of moldavite. It is worth noting here, too, that the sacred Black Stone kept in the Kaaba of Mecca in Saudi

Arabia—to which all Muslims pray—may also be a piece of meteorite.

Roerich developed an interesting network of friends, and ultimately had a strange connection to the shaping of world events in the first part of the 20th century.

FDR's Strange Search for a Messiah in Mongolia

One of Roerich's followers, someone strangely fascinated by Mongolia and the occult, was Henry Wallace (1888-1965), the former Vice President of the United States. The Democrat Wallace was second-in-command to Franklin Delano Roosevelt from 1940 to 1944 and was narrowly defeated by Truman for the Vice Presidential nomination in 1944. Wallace was forced to resign from office in 1946 as Secretary of Commerce because of his opposition to US policies regarding Russia and the atomic bomb.

According to the book *Henry A. Wallace: His Search for a New World Order,*[121] in 1934, at the height of the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his friend Wallace, then Secretary of Agriculture, sent agents to Central Asia. They claimed they were seeking drought-resistant grasses. However, as reported in *Newsweek* magazine, in the Roosevelt Administration, it was common knowledge that FDR and Wallace were actually looking for the reincarnated Jesus in Shambhala, the Buddhist paradise.[121]

For Roerich, who had helped create the League of Nations (predecessor of the U.N.), Shambhala was the archetypal paradise the world was on the brink of becoming, in the new golden age. With Wallace's help, and his high-placed connections, Roerich thought he could bring peace to the world.

According to William Henry in his book *One Foot in Atlantis,*[122] "Their plan was to connect America with a group of spiritual masters whom they believed survived the cataclysm of Atlantis and who lived in Shambhala,

secretly influencing world affairs. This race of Atlanteans were the spiritually actualized human beings who would usher in the new Golden Age, the prophesied kingdom of heaven on earth."

Says Henry:

> If anyone could bring Jesus to FDR it was Roerich. A renowned mystic and flamboyant peacemaker with a bald head and long, pointed goatee, his influence on world affairs began in World War I when he was associated with the formation of the controversial League of Nations and its purpose of creating a New World Order.
>
> At that time Roerich made the bold claim that he was in possession of a piece of a mysterious stone from another world. A divine messenger, Roerich claimed, had sent the stone to earth from the star system Sirius. It had previously been given to the emperor of Atlantis and then to King Solomon in Jerusalem (c. 1000 BC).[122]

According to Roerich, the stone had been hidden in a tower in Shambhala, broadcasting rays that influenced the destiny of the world. In 1921, Roerich acquired possession of it to aid in the formation of the League of Nations. A fragment of the stone was supposedly sent to Europe by Roerich. The stone has been described as being the size of a small finger in the shape of a fruit or heart, shiny grey in color with four unknown hieroglyphs inscribed on it. It had certain magical properties, and could be used for divination. With the failure of the League of Nations, Roerich regained possession of the stone. He reportedly returned the stone to Tibet shortly after seeing a shining disk flying through the air in 1927.[127]

Henry explains that we do not know the outcome of FDR's and Wallace's bizarre expedition. Why were they seeking Jesus in Mongolia? Henry points out the curious similarity of the root words for Mount Meru, the holy

mountain often thought to be in Mongolia, and the dynasty of French Merovingian kings, or Meru-Vingian. This bloodline, shared by much of the royalty of Europe, is said to be connected to the descendants of Jesus, who had survived the crucifixion, and Lady Magdalene, his common-law wife. How this "Meru" dynasty fits into the strange quest of Wallace and Roerich into the Altai Himalaya has yet to seen. Perhaps they were aware of this bloodline of Jesus. Says Henry:

> Whether or not Roerich was successful in locating Jesus is uncertain. However, in 1935, Roerich did bring forth two major accomplishments. He persuaded twenty-two countries, including the US, to gather at the White House to sign the Roerich Peace Pact, which created a 'Red Cross of Culture.' The Roerich pact, which is still in effect today, sought to protect cultural treasures from destruction by means of a special flag of three dots in a red circle on a white banner.
>
> He also, along with Wallace, persuaded FDR to place the Great Seal on the back of the one dollar bill. The Great Seal, which is America's symbolic coat-of-arms, was commissioned on July 4, 1776 and designed under the watchful eye of Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Its purpose was to represent the inspiration for the American Revolution and the divine destiny of the American people. It is the logo for the American enterprise.[122]

At one point, FDR named the Presidential hideaway in Maryland "Shangri-la," suggesting that he was captivated by Roerich's mystic concepts. Eisenhower later renamed the retreat Camp David.

Up until 1948 the world was largely unaware of FDR's, Wallace's and Roerich's supernatural efforts. In that year, during a political battle in his bid for the Presidency, Wallace was discredited for his spiritual beliefs and his

association with Roerich.

Suddenly it was publicized that Wallace was a follower of Roerich, whom he sent on special missions to Tibet and Outer Mongolia, in search of evidence of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It all sounded pretty fantastic. His letters to Roerich, which began with the salutation "Dear Guru," were sensationalized. Political opponents, especially J. Edgar Hoover—the all-powerful head of the FBI who compiled files on all important people—leaked the letters to the press.

Wallace's biographers Graham White and John Maze say that his private papers show he completely severed his ties with Roerich in 1935.[121]

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The Living Gods of the Gobi Desert

One of the first books to discuss the bizarre, legendary underground world of Central Asia was *Beasts, Men and* Gods[118] by the Polish scientist Ferdinand Ossendowski (1876-1945). Ossendowski had lived most of his life in Russia and had attended the University of St. Petersburg. In the 1890s he travelled east through Siberia into Mongolia and western China for several years; he was in awe of the rugged wilderness and mystic Buddhism of these areas.

He returned to Europe at the turn of the century and earned a doctorate in Paris in 1903. He led a tumultuous life as an anticommunist at the time when Bolsheviks took control of more and more of Russia. Ossendowski and a small group of White Russians fled Russia and he and his companions voyaged across Siberia and into Mongolia; their adventures along the way became the bulk of his best-selling book.

Ossendowski and his group then crossed into China from whence he made his way back to Europe. There he wrote his book in 1921, and it was

wildly successful, with the New York publisher E.P. Dutton & Company reprinting it 21 times between August 1922 and June 1923. It was what might be considered an "early New Age best seller."

In the last section of the book Ossendowski writes about the "Mystery of Mysteries—The King of the World," and "The Subterranean Kingdom." Says Ossendowski:

> On my journey into Central Asia I came to know for the first time about 'the Mystery of Mysteries,' which I can call by no other name. At the outset I did not pay much attention to it and did not attach to it such importance as I afterwards realized belonged to it, when I had analyzed and connoted many sporadic, hazy and often controversial bits of evidence.
>
> The old people on the shore of the River Amyl related to me an ancient legend to the effect that a certain Mongolian tribe in their escape from the demands of Jenghiz Khan hid themselves in a subterranean country. Afterwards a Soyot from near the Lake of Nogan Kul showed me the smoking gate that serves as the entrance to the 'Kingdom of Agharti.' Through this gate a hunter formerly entered into the Kingdom and, after his return, began to relate what he had seen there. The Lamas cut out his tongue in order to prevent him from telling about the Mystery of Mysteries...
>
> I received more realistic information about this from Hutuktu Jelyb Djamsrap in Narabanchi Kure. He told me the story of the semi-realistic arrival of the powerful King of the World from the subterranean kingdom, of his appearance, of his miracles and of his prophecies; and only then did I begin to understand that in that legend, hypnosis or mass vision, whichever it may be, is hidden not only mystery but a realistic and powerful force capable of influencing the course of the political life of Asia. From that moment I began making some investigations.[118]

One of Ossendowski's informants told him the following:

More than sixty thousand years ago a Holyman disappeared with a whole tribe of people under the ground and never appeared again on the surface of the earth. ...All the people there are protected against Evil and crimes do not exist within its bournes. Science has there developed calmly and nothing is threatened with destruction. The subterranean people have reached the highest knowledge. Now it is a large kingdom, millions of men with the King of the World as their ruler. He knows all the forces of the world and reads all the souls of humankind and the great book of their destiny. Invisibly he rules eight hundred million men on the surface of the earth and they will accomplish his every order.

One of Ossendowski's informants, Prince Chultun Beyli added this to the story:

This kingdom is Agharti. It extends throughout all the subterranean passages of the whole world. I heard a learned Lama of China relating to Bodgo Khan that all the subterranean caves of America are inhabited by the ancient people who have disappeared underground. Traces of them are still found on the surface of the land. These subterranean peoples and spaces are governed by rulers owing allegiance to the King of the World. In it there is much of the wonderful. You know that in the two greatest oceans of the east and the west there were formerly two continents. They disappeared under the water but their people went into the subterranean kingdom. In underground caves there exists a peculiar light that affords growth to the grains and vegetables and long life without disease to the people. There are many different peoples and many different tribes.

Agharta would appear a rather fanciful lost world, though many persons attest that it really exists. In the last hundred years, a number of travelers and mystics have claimed to have visited Agharta, or at least to have had some contact with its citizens.

The whole idea of hidden Masters in secret underground abodes had been introduced in the West back in the 1800s with Madame Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* (published in London in 1888) and the French writer Louis Jacolliot's books *Le Spiritualisme dans le Monde*[138] (published in Paris in 1875) and *Occult Science in India* (published by Rider, London, in 1884).

Louis Jacolliot (1837-1890) told the earliest tales in the West of secret libraries, underground cities and ancient technology. Said Jacolliot in 1875 about the legendary subterranean world, "This unknown world, of which no human power, even now when the land above has been crushed under the Mongolian and European invasions, could force a disclosure, is known as the temple of Asgartha... Those who dwell there are possessed of great powers and have knowledge of all the world's affairs."

So is there some advanced group ruling the world from a secret fortress, keeping the wisdom of the ages? What of Henning Haslund's mysterious mountain and the land of Hsi Wang Mu? Do these immortals still dwell in their mountain fortresses with their vimanas, like some sort of phantom power? Does some of the UFO activity in Asia originate from these secret vimana hangars in remote mountainous areas? Are the UFOs that fly into Lake Titicaca in South America Triva pushka vimanas that can operate on land and in the air and sea? Will the masters one day step out of their mountain fortresses and reveal themselves to mankind? The idea that some modern UFO phenomena are the result of ancient vimanas that operate as UFOs is a fascinating thought.

We have found with our investigation of vimanas that it begins in the past and goes to our future. The vimanas have never left us— they continue to

fly across the skies. Perhaps a military fighter jet is scrambled to intercept the glowing discoid object. When we hear the occasional news story of a UFO sighting in the Himalayas along the remote borders where Pakistan, India and China all meet it seems natural to assume that some vimana might have slipped from the mountains for a cruise. Some have suggested that places like Mount Shasta and the South American Andes have even more vimana activity because the locations are less militarized and "known" to the locals.

Is there a vimana ride for you in the near future? Only the gypsy fortuneteller knows for sure.

Old alchemical drawing.

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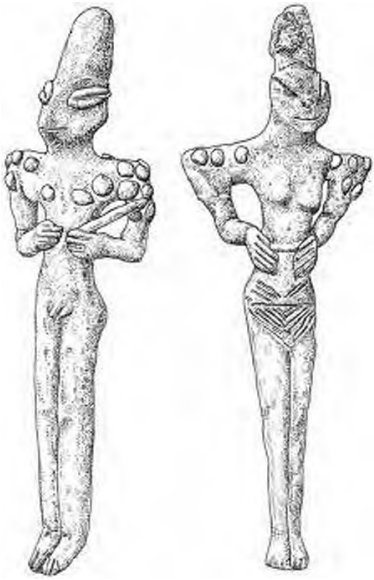
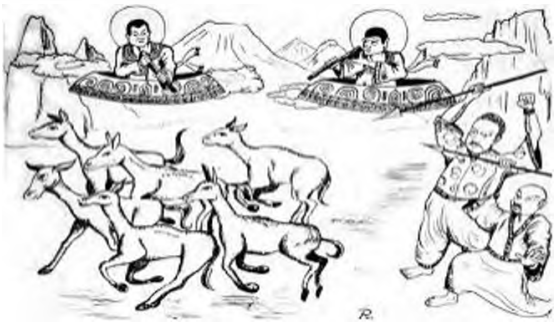
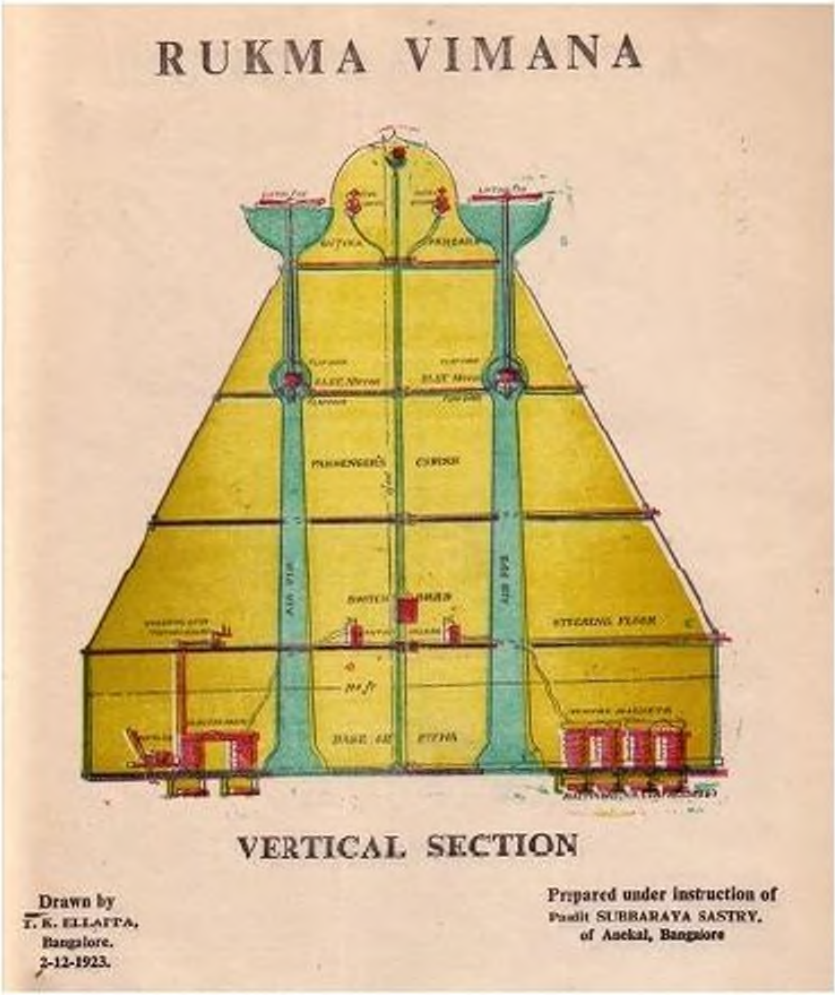


Two Sumerian clay figurines from the Ubaid Period (5000 BC) showing elongated heads. The male on the left is from Eridu and the female on the right is from the ancient city of Ur. Are they the Annunaki of ancient Sumerian legend? Do vimana legends point to them?



An illustration from a Chinese magazine depicting the curious legend of flying men in the Gobi Desert and their use of flying saucers to hunt deer.



A 1923 conceptual drawing of the Rukma vimana.

Indian painting of several vimanas in flight.

A 1923 conceptual drawing of the Sundara vimana.

Mount Kailash in Tibet, the mountain fortress of Shiva.

A Hindu painting of Mount Kailash showing Shiva with his consort, Parvati, inside the mountain while adoring pilgrims come to the mountain.

A giant mural at the Suvarnabhumi Airport, Bangkok, of Rama and his vimana, in this case a chariot being pulled by flying horses.

The top section of the Black Pagoda, also known as Konarak.

Photo of a section of the megalithic temples at Mahabalipuram, southern India.

Photo of a section of the megalithic temples at Mahabalipuram, southern India.

Photo of a submerged temple just offshore from Mahabalipuram, southern India.

A photo of the amazing rock, Krishna's Butterball, at Mahabalipuram, southern India.

Photo of a section of the megalithic temples at Mahabalipuram, southern India.

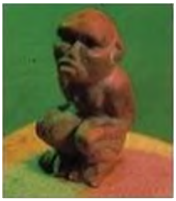
Fantastic animals ornament a temple at Mahabalipuram, southern India.

Close-up of one of the megalithics at Mahabalipuram, southern India.

Perhaps this old magazine cover depicts something similar to a vimana.

Undeciphered seals with extinct animals from the Indus Valley Civilization.

Drainage system at Mohenjo Daro, one of the very advanced cities of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization.



A small statue in the "quizuo" posture.

The citadel at Mohenjo Daro.

One of the priest kings of the Indus Valley civilization.

Docks at the ancient port of Lothal in Gujerat, which are now quite a distance from the sea.

The citadel at Mohenjo Daro.

A painting of a scene from the Ramayana featuring the Pushpaka vimana and its many stories.

A photo from 1870 of one of the largest stones at Baalbek, Lebanon. Were they levitated?

Bad boy of the Ramayana, Ravanna, is depicted flying in his vimana.

In another scene from the Ramayana, Ravanna flies through the air with Sita but must battle the giant vulture Jathayu. Opposite page: Vishnu and consort are flown on the back of the giant bird-god Garuda.

An aerial shot of the narrow strip of land called Rama's Bridge before it goes underwater.

A satellite view of Rama's Bridge.

Two satellite views of Rama's Bridge.

A gold zoomorphic pendant with a gemstone from Panama. It appears to depict some sort of ancient heavy machinery like a backhoe.

A gold mini-airplane at the Gold Museum in Bogota, Columbia.

Top and Bottom: Two different depictions of the curious episode in the Ramayana where Hanuman flies to the Himalayas and brings back an entire mountain in order to heal Rama.

An artist's concept of a vimana as a giant bird in this painting in a museum in Rajastan.

Nicholas Roerich's painting of Buddha meditating in a secert cave in the Himalayas.

Nicholas Roerich's painting called "The Great Spirit of the Himalayas" (1934).

Nicholas Roerich's painting called "The Song of Shambala."

Nicholas Roerich's painting of Kwan Yin at her icy home in the Kunlun Mountains (1933).

Nicholas Roerich's painting called "The Treasure of the Mountain" (1933). Roerich was fascinated by crystals and believed in huge caverns of crystals.

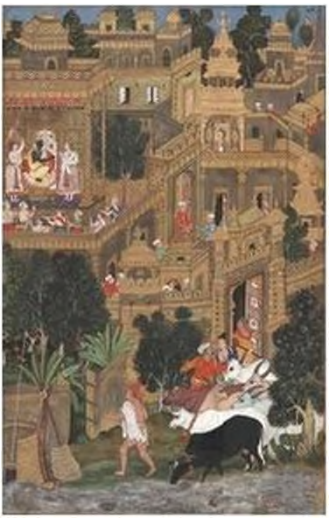
Nicholas Roerich holds a box with the mysterious Chintamani stone in this self portrait.

Krishna breaks his vow not to take sides duing the Kurushetra War.

Ravanna depicted with black skin and ten heads to symbol his wisdom.

Hanuman, with Rama behind him, inspects the building of Rama's Bridge.

Rama and Sita are reunited at the end of the Ramayana.



An Indian painting of Krishna at his palace in Dwaraka, a city now underwater.

A scene from an ancient mural at the Desani Monastery in Serbia. Does it depict a man flying in a vimana?